

**YANNIS PSYCHARIS'S GREEK NOVELS (1888-1929):**

**didactic narratives, cultural views and  
self-referentiality**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this thesis is to examine Psycharis's Greek novels by focusing on his modes of writing and the ideas manifested in them.

Psycharis saw his role as that of an intellectual aiming to reform Greek culture and he fought consistently for the establishment of the demotic – as he understood it – as the language of literature. Yet his novels serve as a filter not only for his views on language and literature, but also for other social and philosophical issues of relevance to his time, and even to contemporary readers.

I have defined three major areas for examination: the didacticism of the novels, expressed in the themes and in the narrative techniques employed by the author; the overall recurring cultural views presented in them, and the preoccupation with the importance of fiction, the role of literature and of the prose writer.

The novels will be examined in chronological order and I shall address each of the three major areas explained above in turn, emphasising the most prominent one in each case. The objective of this thesis is to make Psycharis's Greek novels better known and to indicate the role that he played in the development of Modern Greek prose and culture.

to my parents

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis will examine Yannis Psycharis's Greek novels with the aim of exploring their didacticism and presenting the author's views on language, literature, and other social and philosophical issues. Psycharis was a charismatic 'man of letters' of his era, well informed about scientific advances and cultural developments in Europe, who saw his role as that of an intellectual aiming to reform Greek culture. He considered his novels a means to promote his views on Greek society and he placed great importance on the function of writing literature, so that this activity is often reflected in the texts themselves, implicitly or explicitly, giving them their self-referential aspect. I shall also examine this aspect in my thesis and discuss to what extent it enhances the novels' didacticism. I will include a discussion of the French novels only where an identical narrative or a recurring point in both Greek and French novels needs to be addressed.

Psycharis was a prolific writer, whose work covers about half a century and addresses two different readerships, the Greek and the French. His novels reflect his experiences and ambivalent sentiments as a Greek of the Diaspora, living and working in Paris, and in particular, his two-fold role as a linguist and as a writer of fiction. As pointed out by Golfis in his review in *Noumas*, after the author's death: "[A]ν κανείς εξετάση όλο το συγγραφικό του έργο, τα γαλλικά του βιβλία, επιστημονικά, φιλολογικά, λογοτεχνικά, συλλογές στίχων σε γαλλικά και ιταλική γλώσσα, με κατάπληξη θα σταθή εμπρός στο μεγάλο του όγκο" (1929, 787: 20).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Where I give a quotation from a newspaper or journal, I will give the year of publication, and then the issue number (when there is one) or the exact date, followed by page number. A point to keep in mind is that Psycharis's spelling is idiosyncratic; I have left the quotations in their original spelling but for technical reasons I used the monotonic system. All other passages in Greek are also in monotonic except the quoted passages in Ancient Greek where I have kept traditional breathings and accents.

The period in Psycharis's career studied in this thesis takes as starting point the date of publication of *To Taξίδι μου* in 1888<sup>2</sup>, his first fictional work, and ends with his death in 1929. Thus the study covers the period 1888 to 1929, which includes all of his fiction writing and the publication of the novels. However, as far as I know, all Psycharis's Greek novels were written during the years 1888 to 1914.<sup>3</sup> Yet the author continued writing in French and he even published the French version of his novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904) in 1922 with the title *Le Solitaire du Pacifique*. The two novellas *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* were published in serial form in *Noumas* in 1921, even though they were written much earlier, in 1899 (see below and Chapter Six). The novel *Le Crime de Lazarina* (1926) is the last extensive fictional work published by the author in either Greek or French. Towards the end of his life Psycharis wrote some short plays of no great aesthetic value but it is significant that he continued writing throughout his life.

Apart from his literary work in Greek and in French, Psycharis wrote critical essays and studies on other writers, poems, plays and short stories. Furthermore, most of the author's views about literature are expressed both in his essays and in his creative work, blurring the distinction between critical and fictional discourse. It is important for methodological reasons to point out that any attempt to include all the different aspects of the author's work would result in a superficial analysis, hindering an understanding of its meaning and value. Therefore, since Psycharis's central ideas

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<sup>2</sup>The publication of *To Taξίδι μου* in 1888 was a landmark for the Greek 'language question', for Greek literature, and for the author's aims as a literary writer. It revealed the author's ambitions for the development of Greek culture and it was never surpassed by his subsequent literary work. As Glinos points out in the introduction to the second edition of the novel *Αγνή*, even if Psycharis had never written anything else after *To Taξίδι μου*, his fame and significance for Greek literature would have been assured (Glinos 1930: 29-30).

<sup>3</sup> Psycharis finished writing in 1914 the unpublished novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης*, to which I will refer in Chapter Six of this thesis.

concerned a reform of Greek language and literature, I shall concentrate on the manifestation of these ideas in his Greek novels.

This thesis examines Psycharis's published Greek novels and analyses briefly the unpublished novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (kept in the Benaki Library, as manuscript no. 18677). It must be mentioned, however, that it is difficult to be conclusive about Psycharis's unpublished fictional output. For example, announcements on the covers of his books for future publications were not always reliable but gave suggestions of what the author wanted to do, an indication of his expansive personality. Rigas Golfis in his article in *Noumas* written after the author's death: "Ο Ψυχάρης: η Ζωή, το Φανέρωμα και το Έργο του", mentions an unpublished historical novel and other literary texts: "Μα μεγάλο μέρος του έργου του έχει μείνει ατύπωτο, καθώς ο 'Διγενής Ακρίτας' δημοτικό, ιστορικό μυθιστόρημα, η 'Γραμματική' το επιστημονικό έργο της ζωής του, και άλλα διάφορα λογοτεχνικά, που θα τυπωθούνε από τον εκδοτικό οίκο του Ελευτερουδάκη, εκχωρημένα σ' αυτόν από το συγγραφέα" (1929, 787: 19). Psycharis also refers to some of his unpublished poetry kept in manuscript form in his library (subsequently donated to Emmanuel Benakis) in Zolotas 1928: 840 & 841n. The unpublished novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* raises therefore, the question of whether there is still more literary material that has yet to be discovered.

One of the problems encountered in this study has been the lack of a comprehensive and accurate bibliography of all of the author's work. Furthermore, what makes an examination of the author's literary work difficult is the absence of a critical edition of all his fiction, a problem aggravated by the state of the author's library in the Benaki Library. While there can be no doubt as to the excellent intentions of all the library's employees, the catalogues need to be updated



electronically. There is scope for better preservation of the manuscripts and other valuable material, and even the fear that some texts may have been lost. For information regarding publication details which I was not able to corroborate personally, I rely on the work of other scholars such as Kriaras's book on Psycharis (1981), and Constandoulaki-Chantzou's unpublished doctoral thesis on Psycharis's French novels (1981). The anonymous bibliography in the periodical *Neoellinikos Logos* (1980, 27: 116-125) is useful but contains some inaccuracies, and the more accurate bibliography by Valetas in *Nea Estia* (1980, 107 (1260-61): 106-29) is not conclusive.<sup>4</sup> Useful information is also provided in Moser 1988 regarding critical studies reviewing Psycharis's work, though with some inaccuracies in the dates. Despite the problems encountered, however, the analysis of Psycharis's novels and other texts, offers many possibilities, which are certainly not exhausted in the present thesis.

Psycharis was born in 1854 in Odessa, to a multilingual, cosmopolitan family speaking Russian, French, and the formal Greek (*katharevousa*) of his time (Kriaras 1981: 32). His mother died when he was still a baby and he moved to live with his maternal grandmother in Marseille and then to Paris. He spent some of his childhood years (from six to nine years of age), however, in Constantinople and it was there that he learned to speak Greek from the servants in his house (Psichari 1930: 1262-3). His schooling took place in Paris though, where he was taught Ancient Greek and Latin, and he read in particular the Latin philosopher and tragedian Seneca whose notion of 'hard work', influenced his aspirations (Kriaras 1981: 35). Psycharis's first academic

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<sup>4</sup>See also Valetas's 'Κριτικογραφία' in *Aiolika Grammata* (1979, 9 (53): 298-315). Mastrodimitris mentions a French bibliography by Germaine Rouillard, "Notice Biographique et Bibliographique de Jean Psichari. Imprimerie Administrative, Melun 1930" (1983: 283).

interests revolved around Latin literature, and he often mentioned his Latin teacher, Eugène Benoist, whose lessons he took in order to prepare for his ‘agrégation’, and with whose encouragement he published his first work, the edition of Terence’s *Adelphi* in 1881 (ibid: 37).

In 1882 Psycharis also met Gaston Paris and Ernest Renan.<sup>5</sup> It was in particular his meeting with Renan that would help him find his destiny in work and in life, as he married Renan’s eldest daughter, Noémi, shortly after. He had four children with Noémi: Ernest (1883), Henriette (1884), Michel (1887), and Cornélie (1893). However, in 1913 he divorced Noémi and married Irène Baume (see Tomadakis’s introduction in Psycharis 1991: 11). According to Kriaras, Renan was to give him the incentive and the impetus to develop his true capabilities (op.cit.: 62). He would direct Psycharis’s interests away from French classicism towards something completely new and unexplored, the field of Modern Greek literature. This was to open to him a very fertile area for exploration.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, one of Renan’s concerns in his own work, the reconciling of ‘science’ with ‘poetry’ was to become a recurring theme in Psycharis’s work as well.<sup>7</sup> As Psycharis explained in 1925, in his book on Renan, *Ernest Renan: Jugements et Souvenirs*:

J’avais seulement, par l’effet du hasard, la bonne fortune de commencer, de n’avoir pour ainsi parler, pas de prédécesseur dans la grammaire historique et surtout dans la prose littéraire vivante de la Grèce moderne. J’avais eu la chance inouïe de tomber, à travers les siècles, sur le moment

<sup>5</sup>In dedicating *Quelques Travaux de Linguistique, de Philologie, et de Littérature Helléniques*, to his teachers, he singles out Gaston Paris (1930, vol. I – although the prospective second volume did not materialise).

<sup>6</sup>As Psycharis explains in the preface of *Quelques Travaux de Linguistique, de Philologie, et de Littérature Helléniques*: “Je me dirigeai du pas allègre [...] vers une terre plus inconnue que la terre latine: c’était la terre natale, la terre maternelle, la divine Hellade, je ne parle pas seulement de l’ancienne, mais surtout de la moderne” (Psychari 1930: i).

<sup>7</sup>This is a theme that the author analyses in his article “La Science et les Destinées Nouvelles de la Poésie”, *Nouvelle Revue* (1884, 26: 790-818).

précis où il y avait encore une langue, une grande langue – le grec – à fixer sous sa forme littéraire. Je devenais une date. J'étais donc ainsi sûr de durer, ne fût-ce qu'à titre de document. Dans mes rêves de chaire de littérature française, de romans français annuels, je n'aurais jamais été qu'une faible unité entre plusieurs milliers d'autres. Les romans que je devais faire, je les fis en grec moderne, et ce furent les premiers exécutés dans le grec vivant de nos jours, tels, pour ne citer que mes adaptations françaises, *Jalousie*, *Le Rêve de Yanniri*, *Le Solitaire du Pacifique*, etc., etc. Mes études philosophiques sur Boileau et les *Grotesques*, je les remplaçai par l'étude des origines historiques du grec moderne. Malgré tout, c'était plus neuf [...] je renonçais avec une grande aisance aux succès parisiens, si éphémères; je me sentais naître au cœur une pérennité mathématique. Mon œuvre grecque qui est grecque profondément, tout en étant, par son fond de culture, profondément française, c'est tout de même un lot qui n'est pas celui de tout le monde. Vive l'Hellade et vive la Gaule! (Psichari 1925a: 246-7).

Thanks to the encouragement of his father-in-law, and his own experience, Psycharis understood the importance of the language of ordinary people and believed that the time had come for Greek literature to be written in that language. In 1885, he was appointed Maître de Conférences in the École Pratique des Hautes Études, in the Chair of Medieval and Modern Greek literature. A year later in 1886, Psycharis left Paris on his first journey to Greece – one of the few times he left what was by now his home city - to conduct linguistic research, and this journey which included visits to Constantinople, Chios and Athens, was the inspiration for the narrative *To Tačīdi mou* (1888). In 1904, he succeeded Legrand in the École des Langues Orientales Vivantes, where all his own teachers had taught: Renan, Taine, Egger, Havet, Gaston Paris (Constandoulaki-Chantzou 1981: 69-70).

Even before conducting his linguistic research in Greece, and providing an example of the demotic in prose with *To Tačīdi mou*, the author had expressed his

views on Greek language and literature in his *Essais de Grammaire Historique Néo-Grecque I and II*, 1886-1889, where he recorded his vision of a prose work which would pave the way for Modern Greek writers:

[...] la langue moderne<sup>8</sup> [...] devrait être enfin franchement parlée et écrite. Puisse ce vœu trouver en Grèce quelque écho! On croit, en général, arriver à l'unité dans le style et à la création d'une langue littéraire commune à tous les Grecs, en se servant de la langue ancienne, plus ou moins mélangée de formes modernes. C'est une erreur. Tant qu'on n'aura pas résolument pris le parti d'écrire la langue faussement appelée *vulgaire* ou *populaire*, l'unité que l'on rêve ne sera jamais réalisée; une norme manquera toujours et la porte restera continuellement ouverte à l'arbitraire et à la fantaisie individuelle (1886: XVIII, the emphasis as it is in the text).

It was precisely this vision and the hope of a new Greek literature that sustained his work throughout his life. His aim was to enrich the Greek literature of his time with prose texts written in the demotic – the language of people used in everyday conversation – and to encourage other writers to follow suit. Furthermore, his aim was to establish the demotic as a national language in Greece, giving people an added sense of national consciousness. As Alexandros Argyriou had aptly remarked in his article about the significance of *To Taξίδι μου*: “Με ‘Το Ταξίδι μου’ για πρώτη φορά (κι ενώ είχε αγνοηθεί το έγκαιρο παράδειγμα του Σολωμού) έμπαινε το πρόβλημα της εθνικής γλώσσας σε σωστές βάσεις, συνοδευόμενο όχι μόνο με μια επιχειρηματολογία αλλά και με τη συγκεκριμένη εφαρμογή της, η οποία φανέρωνε και τις δυνατότητες μιας έτσι ιδωμένης γλωσσικής αντίληψης” (1980: 2).

Belonging, as he did, to two different countries, with different cultures, social and linguistic contexts, Psycharis made use of both cultures and tried to leave his

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<sup>8</sup>Psycharis defines demotic as a ‘modern’ language, sometimes referred to – erroneously according to the author – as ‘vulgar’ or ‘popular’.

mark as a literary writer. However, his main ambition was to be distinguished as a Greek prose writer. This was not only because he wanted to promote the language of ordinary people in Greek prose but also because he felt that there was scope for him to contribute to the development of Modern Greek literature, as opposed to French literature, where he claimed that all the ‘places’ of prominence in the literary field had already been taken: “les grandes places sont prises par Chateaubriand, Hugo, Musset, Lamartine, Renan, Balzac – celui-ci beaucoup moins; car au fond Stendhal le dépasse de maintes coudées, mais Stendhal est inconnu [...]” (see Constandulaki-Chantzou 1981: 357). Moreover, as the author eloquently suggested: “[...] écrire en grec, c’est tromper la mort, le moyen de survivre dans un pays de gloires accumulées comme le nôtre!” (Psychari 1895a: xiv).

It was very difficult though to become an accomplished writer in either country. A lot of the time, his inevitable dual stance and the fragmentation of his energy, created problems for the reception of his work which was a source of bitterness to the author (see Chapter Four of this thesis regarding the very ‘lukewarm’ reception of *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, for example). Psycharis kept these doubts in his heart, which must have had lasting repercussions, and he expressed ambivalence about his identity retrospectively, through his character Andreas, who is his alter-ego in the novel *Αγνή* (1913): “Μα, παρακαλώ, γιατί αφτός Ρωμιός, να κουβαλήθηκε στη Φραγκιά; Γιατί τουλάχιστο, αφού κουβαλήθηκε πια, να μην έζησε σα Φράγκος, νάμεινε ψυχόβαθά του Ρωμιός; Δηλαδή ούτε σωστό Ρωμιό να τον πης δεν ταίριαζε. Ο ίδιος ανικανούσε να το προσδιορίση, Φράγκος είναι, είναι Ρωμιός” (Psycharis 1912-3: 17).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Psycharis’s work is full of contradictions, statements and aphorisms that are supported in one work and denied in another.

## 1. The novels of Psycharis

As pointed out above, I have chosen to examine Psycharis's Greek novels because it is in these novels that we find expressed his ideas about Greece, the language of the people, the literature that was written, and that according to him should be written, and other important information about his efforts to define the 'Greek character'.<sup>10</sup> In other words, the novels tend to clarify the author's own identity and role in relation to the Greek people, as well as seeking to familiarise his Greek readers with the scientific advances of his era.

The French novels, on the other hand, addressed a different cultural context and had slightly different objectives.<sup>11</sup> Even though some of his ideas regarding the Greek language problem and the direction that Greek culture should take also appear in his French works, there is not the same intensity and repetition as in the Greek texts. In his French novels, Psycharis seems to have felt almost obliged to introduce the French reading public to what Greek culture was all about. Thus in his novel *Le Rêve de Yanniri* (1897), he keeps citing proverbs learnt from the old housekeeper of his family-home and from his relatives – as in the Greek text. In *L'Épreuve* (1899) also, the characters travel to Corfu and the narrator creates a picturesque description of the island as if to advertise it to the French readers:

Elle est douce et riante, en effet, la belle île de Corfou. Ailleurs, dans les îles de cette même mer Ionienne, des sites parfois plus sauvages, des rochers à pic, des monts abrupts, des terres désolées par les convulsions sismiques, des places désertes, et des maisons en ruine donnent au cœur qui

<sup>10</sup>As is pointed out, indicatively, in his unpublished Greek novel by the narrator: “Με πήρε ανατριχίλα. Μέσα μέσα στον εαυτό μου, σταπεβαθά μου πήγε το μάτι μου και καταλάβαινα πως εμένα τον ίδιο ψυχολογούσε ο αδερφός. Άλλα περιστατικά κι άλλα πρόσωπα. Αλλ’ ο Ρωμιός ένας είναι παντού” (Psycharis 1914: 15).

<sup>11</sup>Furthermore, as the author admitted, his first choice was to write Greek prose, and then French: “[...] J’ai pu être et j’espère que je suis toujours poète français, prosateur grec, puis prosateur français encore, philologue et littérateur, professeur austère et conférencier mondain” (Psychari 1925b: 6).



souffre je ne sais quelle consolation triste, lui marquent leur sympathie, sont avec lui de connivence. A Corfou, tout est paisible, heureux et vert [...] Il semble que là le soleil, à force de briller toujours, engourdisse sous ses rayons toutes ces forêts qui s'étagent le long des collines. [...] Il faisait encore très chaud à la fin d'octobre où ils arrivèrent, et cette chaleur vaporeuse et lassée mettait un grand voile de sommeil et d'oubli sur toutes choses (Psichari 1899b: 124-25).

The author offers information to his readers in the same novel regarding the political situation of the island, explaining when it had been ceded to the Greek state, unlike the nearby mainland province of Epirus which was not yet liberated: “[...] [i]l y avait trois ans à peine que Corfou, avec ses six soeurs, venait d’être rendue à la Grèce, en face de la triste Épire, qui ne connaît pas encore la liberté” (127).

In French literature, Psicharis was following specific literary modes that were set by other novelists; in Greek literature, he was the initiator – despite the fact that the novels have left no trace in the Greek literary canon. In his French novels, Psicharis followed the trends in psychological and social analysis, symbolism, and the propagation of political and religious beliefs (Robinson 1988: 54). Let us examine briefly the main points put forward in the French novels. In *La Croyante* (1899), the author wanted to convey the atmosphere of questioning of moral and religious issues that arose in French society during the period of the ‘Dreyfus Affair’.<sup>12</sup> He linked the turbulent climate of the period with specific religious concerns that were close to his own way of thinking. Accordingly, he made the character Pierre Eyli – who is probably based on Renan – reject the idea of religion as salvation and propose a more tangible form of religion based on scientific credence and on human capabilities. As is suggested by the character: “[d]u moment qu’un soupçon peut exister, il est plus prudent de rejeter l’appui suspect. Quel mensonge ne finit point par apparaître? La

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<sup>12</sup>I will discuss the ‘Dreyfus Affair’ below and also in Chapter Four of this thesis.

seule chose qui demeure, c'est l'univers et ce sont ses lois, l'homme et les lois humaines. Là donc est le salut" (Psichari 1899a: 165).

In *L'Épreuve* (1899), the author attempted a very careful psychological analysis of his characters, trying to portray the behaviour of a father and the motives behind his destruction of his daughter's love affair. He defined the notion of paternal obligation, and rendered successfully the theme of wasted love and youth: "Sa jeunesse avait été immolée à un caprice, à une fantaisie. Et nul au monde ne pouvait plus lui rendre ni sa jeunesse ni son amour" (Psichari 1899b: 251). The ending of the novel is similar to the ending of the novella *Τὸν Θόμην τὰ Τριαντάφυλλα* (1899) (discussed in Chapter Six). The similarities with the Greek novella suggest that the author had the same theme in his mind at that time.

In *Sœur Anselmine* (1919) Psycharis inaugurated a new period in his literary writing, more autobiographical and self-examining. This novel has similarities with the Greek novel *Άγνή* (1913), portraying the main character thinking about what he had achieved up to that point and how circumstances had intervened, forcing his life to take a specific direction. The tone was even more sombre than in the Greek novel, though, not only because several years had passed in the interim but also because the war had cost the author the lives of his two sons, and he was preparing psychologically for his own 'departure'. The author/narrator of the novel openly addresses his dead elder son while presenting alongside his father-in-law, and comparing their qualities and different beliefs of the two in the chapter entitled: "Les Deux Ernest". In invoking his son the tone is very sentimental and touching: "Ô cher enfant, pour qui mon amour ne trouve point d'expression suffisante, ô mon Ernest, je ne mentirai certainement pas au fond de ma pensée – tu le sais, toi qui me connus – mais ce me sera, dans ma douleur inconsolable, une volupté sans pareille de



m'agenouiller devant Toi, de te servir de toute mon âme, de me conformer à ta pensée [...]” (Psichari 1919: 155).<sup>13</sup> He confessed his faith to his dead son, whom he sanctified, but it also seems he wanted to confess to readers, through his characters, that he had tried to live his life with a frank, open attitude, staying faithful to his principles even at the expense of his popularity: “En faisant son mea culpa, il reconnaît avoir eu un grand défaut: la vanité. Croyant détenir toujours la vérité, il avait toujours exprimé son opinion sans ambages, particulièrement aux personnes haut placées. Il n'avait jamais renoncé à ses principes” (229).

Psicharis's subsequent novel in French, *Typesses* (1923), was a study of the behaviour of the two sexes, an effort to understand how relations between couples operate, and a description of the psychology of women. The author dedicated it to his second wife and characterised it as “roman de *psychologie sexuelle*” in his dedication (9, the emphasis as in the text). He repeated in this novel one of the themes he had associated with the behaviour of women in the Greek novels *Ta Duo Adēρφια* (1911) and the unpublished *H Nίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914): the idea that the woman who truly loves would even help her man in his affairs with other women. Certainly, understanding the psychology of women was one of the author's favourite preoccupations, and the female presence had a prominent role in all his novels, Greek and French, either as an artistic or as an erotic image.

The last novel *Le Crime de Lazarina* (1926), was undoubtedly inspired by the Asia Minor Disaster, although set in an earlier if equally poignant period of Greek history, in 1897, suggesting the loss of an ideal that Psicharis had held close to his heart since the writing of *To Taζίδι Mov*: national unity and linguistic uniformity. In

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<sup>13</sup>I often refer to this two-fold position (author and narrator) in Psicharis's novels because it is difficult not to recognise the author in the narrative voice. Furthermore, as will be explained below, in some of the novels the author identifies with one or more of his characters. There is also a partial identification of the author with the readers, as in *Ta Duo Tριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*, Chapter Six, and *Αγνή*, Chapter Eight.

his last published novel, the author returned to favourite themes from his youth, and implicitly promoted his own nationalistic stance and patriotic feelings.<sup>14</sup> The author used a variation on the Oedipus myth and the atmosphere around the time of the Fall of Constantinople, to create an allegorical story that aimed to define the ‘Greek soul’ and the ‘Turkish soul’ respectively. He placed above the conflict, however, the symbol of the child-poet, who chased the enemies away, an image which has some resonance with the chasing of the Turks from Constantinople by the giant brother of the narrator in *To Ταξίδι Μου*: “Au même instant, un chant qui fit tressaillir jusqu’aux moelles les Turcs victorieux, un chant de guerre chanté de la voix la plus pure, la plus chaude et la plus perlée, retentit des hautes fenêtres du konak. C’était le doux poète enfant, c’était Constantin qui chantait ainsi [...]” (Psichari 1926: 255).

Psicharis also translated his novels *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897) and *Ζωή και Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά* (1904) into French as *Le Rêve de Yanniri* (1897) and *Le Solitaire du Pacifique* (1922) respectively, despite the difficulties inherent in the business of translation, perhaps because he considered that their themes would be of interest to both readerships.<sup>15</sup> As he explained in the prologue to his ‘Theater of Ideas’ regarding the difficulties of translation: “Στο δεύτερο το μέρος [του *Όνειρου του Γιαννίρη*] [...] κάθε φορά που πάει ένα πρόσωπο κάτι να κάμη, κάτι να αποφασίση [...] αρχινάει μέσα του ένα είδος μονόλογο, που δε μιλεί πια ο ποιητής μα το πρόσωπο το ίδιο [...] ο τρόπος αφτός μια να ρωτάς και μια μοναχός σου ναποκρίνεσαι, είχαν ίσια ίσια ο

<sup>14</sup> As was pointed out by the narrator of *To Ταξίδι Μου*: “ό,τι πολεμά να κάμη ο στρατός για τα φυσικά σύνορα, θέλει η γλώσσα να το κάμη για τα σύνορα τα νοερά· πρέπει και τα δύο τους να παν πολύ πιο μακριά, να πάρουν πιώτερο τόπο” (Psicharis 1993: 201). Let us not forget the inscription the author chose for his grave: “I look across from my tomb at Asia until one day we go back to reclaim our ‘City’ (Constantinople)” (my translation).

<sup>15</sup> According to my research, Psicharis published *Le Solitaire du Pacifique* in 1922. Although Valetas’s bibliographical references mention an edition of 1907, I was not able to verify this information by my own research or from the references of other scholars. As mentioned in Constandoulaki-Chantzou’s thesis, the newspaper *Mercure de France* was going to publish the French version of the novel *Ζωή και Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά* that Psicharis was translating then from the Greek, from 15<sup>th</sup> August to 15<sup>th</sup> September 1921, before its publication in book form by the publishing house Albin Michel (1981: 257).

τρόπος ο ρωμαίικος. Για τούτο δεν μπόρεσα ποτέ μου να μεταφράσω το *Γιαννίρη*. Στο γαλλικό δεν έρχεται [...]" (Psycharis 1901: 40). It is significant, however, that despite the differences in the mode of expression in the two languages, and contrary to what one would expect from his proclamations that "writing in Greek offers more possibilities whereas in French all the places of prominence had been taken" (as mentioned above), the author wanted to make his work known to both readerships. Apart from these two novels, Psycharis also wrote his short stories: *Ζούλια* (1891),<sup>16</sup> *Ο Μάγος* (1892), *Ο Μουσαφίρης* (1892)<sup>17</sup>, *Το Δαχτυλίδι του Γύγη* (1911) in both languages.<sup>18</sup>

Psycharis kept a few of the remarks pertaining to the Greek language question and Greek society even in the French texts, where they also appear as digressions from the main plot. For example, the French novella *Jalousie* (1891) also presents some of the author's views on the state of the Greek language and its literature: "Mais ne me pousse pas toujours à prendre part à la lutte. J'avais jadis deux ou trois idées sur notre jeune littérature; peut-être en aurais-je tiré quelque parti" (in Psichari 1893a: 315).<sup>19</sup> Even though the reference is more condensed than in the Greek text *Ζούλια*

<sup>16</sup>Published in *Estia* (1891, 12: 177-84 & 14: 209-15) and in *Ρόδα και Μήλα Α'* (Psycharis 1902b: 180-221), the French *Jalousie* was published in *Cadeau de Noces* (Psichari 1893a: 233-319).

<sup>17</sup>Published in *Estia* (1892, 8: 113-15) and in *Ρόδα και Μήλα Α'* (op. cit.: 224-30), the French version *L'Étranger* was published in *Cadeau de Noces* (op. cit.: 217).

<sup>18</sup>*Ζούλια* is translated as *Jalousie*; it appeared in *Nouvelle Revue* from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 1<sup>st</sup> November 1891, as is mentioned in its book form – it was printed in Paris, in 1892, only in one hundred copies (see Psichari 1895b: 5). It appeared together with the French translation of *Ο Μουσαφίρης*, '*L'Étranger*', and another French novella, '*Cadeau de Noces*', in Psycharis's *Cadeau de Noces*, a book comprising the three novellas entitled by the latter (see previous footnotes). *L'Étranger* appeared as well in the periodical *Revue Blanche* (1893b, 17: 190-96). *Ο Μάγος* is translated as *Micropolis* and included in *Autour de la Grèce* (Psichari 1895a: 233-44). *Το Δαχτυλίδι του Γύγη* is translated as *L'Anneau de Gyges: Trimythie*. It is a typed text with some handwritten corrections by the author, completed in 1920. The text is kept in the Benaki Library, no. 18145, and it has not been published. The author mentions also in the prologue to his short stories: *Στον Ίσκιό του Πλατάνου* (1911) that he had translated the story "Τα Σκουλαρίκια" into French, and that the same story was also translated into English by a poetess called Amy Skovgaard-Pedersen (Psycharis 1911: 5-6). I was unable to locate either text, as there is no specific mention of the journal or the dates of publication. However, there is a Dutch translation of Psycharis's short stories, dated 1919, as mentioned in Stavropoulou's bibliographical references for translations of Modern Greek literary texts (Stavropoulou 1986: 231).

<sup>19</sup>"La lutte" refers to the linguistic debates of the period.

(1891, 14: 214) the objectives are clearly the same, that is to present the linguistic issue and his views to readers. Overall, we can say that in the French novels there is the usual generalising tone that is characteristic of the ideological novel. They present some similar ideas to the Greek ones; however, in the Greek novels the judgments are more specific, and the generalisations more overt, which make the narratives more clearly didactic.

## **2. The cultural context in Greece and in France and its impact on Psycharis's work (1888–1929)**

The period in which Psycharis writes (from the end of the 1880s to the end of the 1920s) was characterised by political controversies, tragic defeats in war, military interventions and dictatorships, and the prominence of social and racial issues. Yet this social reality was only partly reflected in his novels. His Greek fiction, in particular the novels, does not follow any specific trend apart from aiming to create a tradition of novels written in the demotic. In the author's critical essays and in his novels there is a frequent emphasis on the idea that modern Greek literature was in need of development and therefore his own novels were paving the way: "[...] Έπειτα συλλογίστηκα την Ελλάδα που όχι μόνο τους στίχους έχει ανάγκη, που έχει ανάγκη και τα πεζά, που έχει ανάγκη μια γλώσσα" (Psycharis 1907b: 10).

The main literary production in Greece at the time when Psycharis's fiction appeared was the 'ethographic' narrative, which typified behavioural characteristics and geographical places that represented what was thought of as Greek.<sup>20</sup> For a prose-

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<sup>20</sup>As is pointed out by Moullas in the Sokolis Introduction: "[ηθογραφία σημαίνει] [γ]ενικώς μελέτη (και περιγραφή) ανθρωπίνων ηθών. Διαχρονική στην ουσία της, η περιγραφή αυτή αποκτά ιδιαίτερο βάρος, όπως είναι επόμενο, σε 'ρεαλιστικές' εποχές (όπου τα πρωτεία ανήκουν στην παρατήρηση) χωρίς πάντως να χάνει την ποικιλία και την πολυεδρικότητά της" (1998: 168), and he continues by defining the Greek 'ethography': "Η ηθογραφία, κατά κανόνα θα δηλώνει και θα συμπαραδηλώνει [...]"

writer, writing in Greece in the last decades of the nineteenth and even at the beginning of the twentieth century, there were certain conventions to follow, which Psycharis often tried to circumvent in order to promote effectively his own agenda. As Beaton points out “the common denominator of almost all the fiction published in Greek during the last two decades of the nineteenth century [was] the detailed depiction of a small, more or less contemporary, traditional community in its physical setting” (1994: 72).

Psycharis’s fiction by contrast, pointed above all to the power and experience of the individual. In most of his novels, there is an educated bourgeois as the main character, either a professor or a writer – in any case an intellectual – who is exceptionally talented, and who transforms the lives of ordinary people with his skills. It was important for Psycharis to promote the role of the artist who had specific objectives regarding Greek language and culture, to reinforce the significance of his own work. The author assigns, however, a very specific function to the rural community, which is related to its language, since his aspirations regarding the renewal of Greek literature were centred on the question of language. Therefore, when there is a type of mirroring in his novels, it aims to reflect the everyday life of Greece in relation to the spoken language of ordinary people. Psycharis places himself overall in a ‘realist tradition’ in both his Greek and French novels, and aspects of some of his Greek novels do not deviate from the ‘ethographic’ mode, in particular *Ta Duo Adέρφια*, because he wanted to define ‘Greek behaviour’ in them but also to convey the thoughts of his characters in a vivid way.<sup>21</sup> He remained

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πολύ πιο συγκεκριμένα πράγματα: την ελληνική ύπαιθρο, τους ανθρώπινους τύπους της, το διήγημα, το πραγματικό και σύγχρονο γεγονός, το γενικό, το συνηθισμένο και το επαναλαμβανόμενο, όχι το σπάνιο και το μοναδικό” (ibid: 169).

<sup>21</sup>One significant reaction of the period to the ‘ethographic’ narrative and the extreme style of naturalism, appeared in the pages of the periodical *Techni* (1.11.1898-12.10.1899). It involved Nietzsche’s philosophy, which found some response in Greek literature, as it inspired writers to a more



faithful to a ‘dogma of truth’ in most of his novels, as admitted also in his dedication of *L'Épreuve* to Colonel Picquart: “Les romanciers au cœur tendre aiment à punir le vice et à récompenser la vertu. Faut-il faire comme eux? Il faut faire comme la vie” (1899b: xii). This was a firm belief from the beginning of his career and it remained almost unaltered throughout his life. It is significant that the author concluded the first volume of his *Essais de Grammaire Historique Néo-Grecque* by pointing out that: “[...] on nous persuadera difficilement que la vérité, quelle qu’elle puisse être, n’est pas le but suprême de la vie des individus aussi bien que des nations, et que les fictions les plus brillantes égaleront jamais les splendeurs de la réalité (Psichari 1886: 288).<sup>22</sup>

As a result of his conviction that there was no developed prose fiction at that time in Greece, Psycharis stressed his connection to the French ideological and literary climate, and viewed his own novels in parallel with those of his French counterparts. He referred, for example to his novel *Ta Διο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*, as a historical and positivist example of literature, even though this is not shown to be the case when one reads the novel (1921, 722: 83). He also compared his novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* with French novels of the period, complaining in his

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active role, even on a national level. However, Psycharis never subscribed to those progressive tendencies, perhaps because he feared that the focus would be shifted away from the linguistic issue to other areas of national interest. As is pointed out by Gounelas: “Η Τέχνη αγωνιζόταν εναντίον του πατριωτικού αισθήματος και της εκλαΐκευσης της λογοτεχνίας. Οι δυο αυτές τάσεις της εποχής για τους προοδευτικούς της Τέχνης οδηγούσαν αντίστοιχα στο ‘ηθογραφικό βαυκάλημα’ (την εξιδανίκευση της ζωής του χωριού, όπως τη βρίσκουμε σε μερικά έργα του Δροσίνη και του Εφταλιώτη) και σ’ έναν κάποιο ρεαλισμό που είχε τελείως ηθικο-διδακτικό χαρακτήρα (τα λογοτεχνικά, παραδείγματος χάρη, έργα του Ψυχάρη)” (Gounelas 1984: 78). It is interesting that Psycharis felt sufficiently threatened by the new ideology to attempt to ridicule the idea of the “Super Man” in his play *Ο Κυρούλης* (1901) while proposing also the significance of the democratic system in his play *Ο Γουανάκος* (1901) (Gounelas 1984: 81). Furthermore, Psycharis never abandoned the principles, at least, of positivist-naturalist writing, in particular the adherence to a system, which suited his personality.

<sup>22</sup>However, *Το Ταξίδι μου*, is the most notable exception not only to the application of the rules of ‘truth’ in fiction (verisimilitude) but also to the conventions of the bourgeois novel as it emphasises its connection with an oral tradition. It is important to stress again the contradictions between the author’s proclamations and the mode of writing in his novels.

correspondence with Eftaliotis that it had not received the critical attention that it deserved: “Πώς δεν έχει δράση το ρομάντζο; Πώς δε φαίνονται τα πρόσωπα από κείνο που κάνουν κι όχι από κείνο που ψυχολογώ; Μα και σαν είτανε τι πειράζει; Δες τον Balzac και το Zola και το Flaubert, και το Bourget, σα θέλεις. Να πρόσωπα που σταβρώνουν τα χέρια τους ενώ μιλάει και ρητορέβει ο μυθιστοριογράφος. Ο Γιαννίρης όμως; Τι λόγος;” (Karatzas 1988: 135).

It is true that Psycharis was influenced primarily by the philosophical and literary trends that were current in France at the time, and in particular by the philosophy of Hippolyte Taine. As Kriaras mentions: “Ο Ψυχάρης παιδί της εποχής του, θαυμάζει απεριόριστα την επιστήμη και τα αποτελέσματά της. Θα μείνει ασυγκίνητος από τις νέες φιλοσοφικές τάσεις που προβάλλουν μετά το 1890, τα κηρύγματα δηλαδή των φιλοσόφων Boutroux και Bergson [...] ενώ [λοιπόν] την κατεύθυνσή του προς τη νεοελληνική πνευματική ζωή την οφείλει σε επίδραση του Ρενάν, την ειδικότερη πνευματική του διαμόρφωση τη χρωστά στο ‘συστηματικό’ φιλόσοφο Τεν” (2000: 45). In 1864 with his *Introduction à l' Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, Taine suggested that the purpose of a national literature is to define the psychology of the people to which it belongs (Lemaitre 1982: 315).

The literary theory of Taine, summed up in the well-known formula that the conditions of ‘race’, ‘milieu’, and ‘moment’ determine the capabilities of an artist and a literary phenomenon, was influential for the majority of the literary critics and writers active at the end of the nineteenth century and was filtered in particular in the work of Ernest Renan (ibid: 317). Based on the positivist theory, Renan exalted the historical conception of art and of the individual, and he turned the spotlight away from the individual to the collective (ibid: 319); echoes of these ideas are to be found in Psycharis’s *To Taξίδι μου*, in his references to the collective Greek soul: “[...] εγώ

τίποτις δεν είμαι· η εθνική ψυχή κάτι σημαίνει· προσπάθησα να δω που και που τι έχει μέσα της αφτή η ψυχή, και μιλώντας για μένα, συλλογιόμμαι τους άλλους” (Psycharis 1993: 39). Taine’s influence had also contributed to Zola’s ideology as can be attested in *Thérèse Raquin* (1868), where the author used his [i.e. Taine’s] views on physiology to investigate the sexual and criminal instincts of his characters. The *Rougon-Macquart* cycle that ensued, confirmed Zola’s systematic appraisal of human actions according to the principles set by Taine: ‘race’ or heredity, ‘milieu’ or environment, and ‘moment’ or (immediate) circumstances giving to the actions and motives of characters a sense of determinism. Psycharis consistently adhered to a ‘system’ in his linguistic analysis and in his novels which have specific objectives to achieve, and the influence on him of Zola’s Naturalism is obvious in the novels *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* and *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), as will be explained in Chapters Five and Six respectively.

By 1899, Zola was embroiled in the Dreyfus affair, “which had divided French opinion throughout the closing years of the century” (Mehlman 1994: 824). Psycharis also participated actively in the furore that followed the conviction of Dreyfus for treason, coming out in support of Zola, exemplifying his own democratic beliefs and radical, fearless stance. The turbulent period of the ‘Affair’ established not only the importance of ‘truth’, as objective empirical evidence, but demonstrated also the ease with which the manufactured ploys of adversaries could pass for worthy instruments for a cause (ibid: 825). There was thus a preoccupation with the flexible boundaries between ‘truth’ and ‘fiction’ in French society.<sup>23</sup> It was apparent that the positivist radical movement wanted to expose those who had condemned Dreyfus by

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<sup>23</sup>The forces fighting for Dreyfus’s innocence managed to bring finally a climate of democratic renewal that lasted at least until the outbreak of war in 1914 (Kriaras 1981: 327).



manipulating the notions of ‘truth’ and ‘obligation’ and, therefore, to alter such flawed conceptions. Psycharis also became a member and later a vice-president of the ‘Ligue des Droits de l’Homme’, and kept in touch with Zola while the latter was in exile (Kriaras 1981: 326). Characteristically, he dedicated his novels *La Croyante* (1899) to Émile Zola, and *L’Épreuve* (1899) to Colonel Picquart, who was also involved in the case and had been imprisoned for his ideas: “Ami grand et cher [wrote Psycharis in September 1898] je vous offre ce que j’ai sous la main. Ce n’est pas grand’ chose. Acceptez-le cependant. Je tiens à ce petit livre pour deux raisons, parce que je l’ai écrit en des jours sombres et parce que je vous l’avez lu, sur un exemplaire d’épreuves, tandis que vous étiez en prison” (Psychari 1899b: i). Significantly, in an article presented in *Noumas* a few years after the ‘case’, Psycharis also made an association between the Dreyfus Affair and the linguistic battle in Greece, ending up condemning the position taken by Vikelas’s Association (Σύλλογος προς Διάδοσιν Ωφελίμων Βιβλίων) because of a disagreement regarding the correct form of language for writing literature (see 1905a, 144: 1-2). A change in Psycharis’s ideological position is noted after the war of 1914, however, when the author lost his sons and his fighting spirit and turned to Catholicism as a tribute to his first son’s (Ernest’s) conviction. In that respect, he renounced his strict adherence to the scientific spirit and scientific principles, and, interestingly, he became close to Barrès, who had been an adversary in the years of the ‘Dreyfus Affair’, in the camp of the anti-Dreyfusards and against the ‘Ligue des Droits de l’Homme’ (Robinson 1988: 54n).

The other important cultural feature of Psycharis’s period was the novel of psychological analysis. It is significant that Bourget, a prominent novelist of the period, had defined in his *Pages de Critique et de Doctrine* (1912), the sense of ‘déracinement’ experienced by his generation as a result of their objections to

scientific determinism. Addressing his friend Jules Lemaître, Bourget noted: “[we] both grew up in an atmosphere of scientific determinism, where literature was considered for its documentary value. We learned that literary analysis grows out of social analysis and it in turn out of political analysis [...] but even Taine failed to see that we must arrive at an integral traditionalism” (cited in Singer 1976: 50). Maurice Barrès in *Les Déracinés* (1897) had projected similar views that exemplified the dangers of rejecting one’s roots. The narrator of the novel stressed the same idea of ‘uprooting’, describing the efforts of the nefarious Professor Bouteiller to turn his disciples towards an abstract universalism: “Déraciner ces enfants, les détacher du sol et du groupe social où tout les relie, pour les placer hors de leur préjugés dans la raison abstraite, comment cela le gênerait-il, lui qui n’a pas de sol, ni de société, ni, pense-t-il, de préjugés” (Barrès 1930: 24). Bourget’s observations, like those expressed by Barrès, marked the need for a transition from the rather mechanistic models proposed by positivism and naturalism towards the psychological analysis. The ‘novel of psychological analysis’ aimed to substitute a more detailed description and understanding of feelings and of behaviour of characters in the place of the ‘hypothesis, experiment, verification’ formula. As a consequence it became important not to describe what the characters did, or did not do, but what they were thinking (Rey 1993: 161). It seems that some of the above ideas must have influenced Psycharis in his later writing, at least in his last Greek novel, *Αγνή*, where the main character experiences that feeling of being uprooted and of isolation and seeks to express his thoughts through music.

Psycharis favours the psychological analysis of his characters describing their motives, feelings, and actions through an omniscient narrator or by intermittently allowing their own perspectives and thoughts to come across to the readers whilst he

offers his own insights into their behaviour, in a narration approximating the ‘style indirect libre’, as in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904) and *Αγνή* (1913). However, as Peri has pointed out, the internal lives of characters in Psycharis’s narratives never really gain a prominent place, perhaps because the directness of the ‘spoken’ form of language – which according to him, is more ‘mimetic’ than *katharevousa* – cannot render the complexity of thoughts and prevents the descriptions from achieving depth and multiple dimensions (see Peri 1994: 79 & 79n). Peri’s argument is, of course, open to criticism, but it tends to agree with Psycharis’s own belief in presenting everything in literature with a frank, open attitude. Perhaps it is for this reason that the two novels of Psycharis mentioned above, which seem to present the internal thoughts of characters more than the other novels, have been considered his most interesting ones and the most pleasurable to read.

Psycharis must have been influenced also by Anatole France, whose intellectual charm he praised in his preface to *Cadeau de Noces* (1893) which was dedicated to him. Anatole France promoted “the free expression of thought regardless of any practical or moral consequences” (Piaget Shanks 1919: 95), and his novels exhibit balanced imagination and analysis (ibid: 210), a combination which was appealing to Psycharis’s taste. As Psycharis explained, France “[avait] trouvé la juste voie entre le roman d’analyse et le rêve dans le roman” (Psychari 1893a: viii). The analysis of female behaviour and female thought are also recurring themes in Psycharis’s novels and one could find a similar thematic approach in the popular fiction of the twentieth century, for example in the works of Marcel Prévost, Marcelle Tinayre, and Colette (see Coward 1997: 87). These must have provided if not the model, at least the ideas which Psycharis used in his novels. Furthermore, despite the author’s aversion to the Symbolist movement and to symbolist writers he used

elements of symbolism in his novel *Άγνή* (1913), (as will be discussed in Chapter Eight).<sup>24</sup> However, in this novel Psycharis created his own symbolist technique (with the inclusion of music and specific references), and did not follow other Greek novelists; the main character of the novel even dismisses with indignation the work of other symbolist writers (Psycharis 1912-3: 48). The different elements and influences detected in Psycharis's novels are somewhat contradictory and no single element is predominant. They simply suggest that the author was aware of the cultural climate of his era but remained faithful only to one aim and idea in all his texts, to promote the 'spoken' form of language in Greek literature.

It seems, therefore, that Psycharis had the opportunity to be part of a period characterised by intense and varied polemical ideological and literary movements. His active participation in French society and its cultural climate can be seen reflected in his Greek novels, which aim to refashion Greek fiction after the French example in order to serve the needs of the Greek culture (Robinson 1988: 54). Nevertheless, even though the author was influenced by the spirit of the times, he did not follow these trends blindly or faithfully, and he always sought to give things his own interpretation; to write, for example, a novel with Realist or Symbolist elements as he understood them, in pursuit of his aim of establishing the 'spoken' form of language in literature.

### 3. The critical reception of the Greek novels

Psycharis's Greek novels have received very little attention with regard to their literary features because they have been characterised as lacking in aesthetic value. Most of the critics have concentrated on the language of the novels, occasionally

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<sup>24</sup>Psycharis spoke unfavourably of the French Symbolist writers – including the Greek-born poet Jean Moréas – in his article: "Le Vers Français Aujourd'hui et les Poètes Décadents", *Revue Bleue* (1891, 23: 721-27).

offering an ideological overview. Their main objections to the novels being judged by literary standards, are that they are “full of didactic interventions and self-congratulatory autobiographical indulgence; they do not maintain an objective distance from their subjects or follow a focused realistic narrative line” (Robinson 1988: 54).

Most of the reviews written about Psycharis’s linguistic and literary work refer to the text *To Ταξίδι μου* (1888) and Alkis Angelou has included a few significant extracts in his edition of *To Ταξίδι μου* (1971: & 1993: 209-63). The majority of these references analyse its significance in Modern Greek literature from the point of view of the language and, secondly, its ideas, but pay little attention to its form and its specific narrative features.<sup>25</sup> This trend is followed in a number of essays written about Psycharis’s Greek novels. The critics either accept the novels for their symbolic contribution to the language question, claiming that any prose work written in demotic was a significant contribution towards winning the linguistic battle or they accept the author’s contribution to the language question but fail to connect it to his literary work, while some even dismiss the novels entirely as aesthetically flawed. In the first case the analysis often ends up being laudatory.<sup>26</sup> Most of the reviews, however, accept the symbolic value of Psycharis’s prose but are reserved as to its value independent of the language question.<sup>27</sup> The most supportive and extensive

<sup>25</sup> An exception to the reviews written about *To Ταξίδι μου* is Meraklis’s article in *Nea Estia* which analyses it as a literary work (1988, 123 (1463): 797-805). Meraklis explains that the text is an expression of magical realism – a precursor to some of Márquez’s writings – where mythical heroes appear alongside suggestions about language use, fantasy and humorous writing, that make this book, in his opinion, an accomplished artistic achievement; he does not exclude the possibility that it might witness a resurgence in popularity.

<sup>26</sup> As in the case of P. E. Pavolini writing on Psycharis’s novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, *Noumas* (1905, 144: 4-6), M. Filintas, “Ο Ψυχάρης”, *Nea Estia* (1929, 6 (70): 956-58), M. Petridis, “Ψυχάρης”, (*ibid*: 946-48),

<sup>27</sup> See Y. Vlachoyannis, “Ψυχαρισμού Μνημόσυνο”, *Nea Estia* (1929, 6 (70): 938-41), Y. Chatzinis (1943: 5-58), A. Chourmouzios, “Είκοσι Χρόνια από το Θάνατο του Ψυχάρη, 30 Σεπτεμβρίου 1929–30 Σεπτεμβρίου 1949”, *Angloelliniki Epitheorisi* (1949, 4 (6): 193-97). Also “Ο Άνθρωπος, ο Αγώνας, το Σύστημα, μια Εποπτεία και μια Προοπτική”, *Nea Estia* (1954, 55 (644): 670-77), L. Politis, “Η

reviews were the ones by other demoticist writers, who analysed the novels in *Noumas* and emphasised the significance of Psycharis's work.

Rigas Golfis's reviews, which appeared in *Noumas* either anonymously (although the identity of the writer would have been obvious to readers of the period) or with his identity revealed, praised the literary work and the author, and attempted to emulate in the review the vocabulary and the tone that Psycharis used in his novels, which was, of course, the clearest possible endorsement of his fiction.<sup>28</sup> Sotiris Skipis praised the novel *Ta Duo Adérfia* in *Noumas* (1912: 465: 66-69 & 466: 84-86), and Kostas Paroritis's review of *Ta Duo Triantáφυλλα του Χάρου* in *Noumas* (1921, 740: 379-81 & 742: 42-44) pointed out that Psycharis belonged to the French school of psychological analysis which stressed the importance of the human soul rather than events (ibid: 43). Glinos's analysis in the introduction to the second edition of *Αγνή* (1930: 7-31) suggests that the obvious preoccupations of the novels overshadowed their artistic value. Glinos also points out that Psycharis's literature was a persistent analysis which could be described as narcissistic. He identifies the two main themes that preoccupied the author: love and ambition. 'Love' is the theme analysed in most of the novels and together with language it constitutes the author's most constant preoccupation. He indicates also the importance of form in Psycharis's novels.

His fellow demoticist writers praised Psycharis's work in a spirit of mutual appreciation and in self-defence against 'purist' writers; but very little of their analysis had any objective critical value. As Tziovas has pointed out: "[f]requently,

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Πεζογραφία του Ψυχάρη, Σχεδιάσμα", (ibid: 698-700), E. Venezis, "Η Αυθεντική Δόξα", (ibid: 588-89), Karantonis (1959: 120-30). Xenopoulos on the other hand rejects the author's novelistic work completely but confirms his admiration for his linguistic system and methodology in his work: "Το Έργο του Ψυχάρη", *Nea Estia* (1929, 6 (68): 838-42). On the relations between the two authors and their respective views on the language question, see "Γλώσσα και Γλωσσικό Ζήτημα", in Trichia-Zoura 2003: 344-95.

<sup>28</sup>See *Noumas* (1911, 437: 327-33 & 438: 345-49), the 'anonymous' (1911, 443: 426) and (1913, 511: 160-63 & 512: 175-78), (1929: 787: 18-21). See also Chapter Eight of this thesis.



the critic contemporary with the writing of the text, evaluates it in terms of the ideas and arguments expressed in it rather than in terms of its formal features and its ‘aesthetic qualities’” (1986: 186). The exception seems to be Palamas’s critical study of *To Taξίδι μου*, which approaches the work independently of the symbolism that surrounded it. He places it in the context of the period comparing it with similar types of narratives like *Italienische Reise* by Goethe or the work of Heine and describing its form as “a type of mosaic with a complete internal unity” (1938: 13-4, but written in 1906).

Thrasyvoulos Stavrou explains that the most significant themes in Psycharis’s novels are love and artistic creation. He analyses the characters in his Greek novels and stresses the author’s perceptive and analytical skills. However, he points out that the linguistic aims and scope of the author’s plan prevented the artistic inspiration achieving its full potential (1959: 9-20).

The faults of the novels were singled out in both the analysis of Thrylos, which contains a few inaccuracies about the author’s life and work (1963: 227-279),<sup>29</sup> and Sachinis (1971: 203-20), which repeats some of the points of the former. These were two of the most extensive studies on Psycharis’s prose. Thrylos overemphasised the self-referential aspect in Psycharis’s novels. However, she accurately pointed out that Psycharis possessed the “faults of his best qualities” (230): he was ambitious, hard working and had a fighting spirit but these qualities also account for his inflexible attitude and the stagnation in his themes and method of writing. Sachinis’s analysis closely followed the same arguments, which makes one wonder whether Psycharis’s

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<sup>29</sup>The same analysis in “Ο Ψυχάρης (1854-1929): ο Άνθρωπος – ο Λογοτέχνης”, *Nea Estia* (1954, 55 (644): 701-23).

novels were really read at all. Markos Avgeris also dedicated a few words, with an emphasis on *To Taξίδι μου* (in 1966: 101-115).<sup>30</sup>

Petros Charis analysed all the novels in *Nea Estia* (1980, 107 (1260-61): 174-87), and referred to other reviews as well. He attributed the weaknesses of the novels to the ‘thesis’ that they had to defend (182), adding that it was only in the novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, that the author managed to create a genuine combination of both didacticism and captivating fiction and to transcend the limitations of promoting a thesis.<sup>31</sup> A few years later, Charis also analysed separately *To Taξίδι μου* in *Nea Estia* (1988, 123 (1463): 770-75); he pointed to the use of a simple language that brings the narrator closer to readers, and the convincing arguments that create an affinity with readers. He also praised Psycharis’s strong patriotism. Charis talked about the rhetoric that can be detected in the novel but attributed, wrongly in my opinion, the explosion of ‘ethography’ (characterised by its emphasis on general remarks and a typology of characters), to the demoticist movement (ibid: 774).

Kriaras’s book on Psycharis (1981) on the other hand, the most extensive study on the author, refers to the novels as a means of establishing Psycharis’s intellectual, political and religious profile, the emphasis being on describing the man behind the work and the ‘myth’. Constandoulaki-Chantzou’s unpublished doctoral thesis (1981) analyses Psycharis’s French novels, situating him in the French socio-cultural context and discusses his work alongside the endeavours of other French authors of the period.

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<sup>30</sup>Mario Vitti in his *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* suggested that the Greek novels (apart from *To Taξίδι μου*) were marginal to the main literary activities of the author which was the writing of his French novels (1978: 258). Linos Politis just mentions the novels in his own *Ιστορία της Νεοελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας* (1978: 210). Dimaras also sees in Psycharis’s writing a strong tendency towards self-centeredness (1982: 376).

<sup>31</sup>See also Charis 1981: 9-34.



Babiniotis refers to Psycharis's fiction in *Nea Estia* (1988, 123 (1463): 806-19) as “γλωσσολογικά στρατευμένα [...] που κύριος στόχος και μέλημά της είναι να παραγάγει πρότυπα χρήσεως μιας δημοτικής γλώσσας όπως την ευαγγελίζεται ο γλωσσολόγος” (808). There has also been analysis of Psycharis's novels, and short stories, in the articles written by Beaton, Holton, and Robinson in *Mantatoforos* (1988, 28: 46-68). The latter – together with Tomadakis's introduction to the Ouranis edition of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, (1991: 1-47) – are the most recent articles to my knowledge, and I will refer to them from time to time in my thesis. I will also refer to other critical responses if relevant to the novel under discussion in each of my chapters.

Finally, to the foregoing I would like to add the opinion of Eftaliotis, the closest friend and ally of Psycharis, who characterised him in 1894, as a lyric poet (referring to his novella *Ζούλια*), and as a scientific poet (referring to the novella *Cadeau de Noces*) (in Mastrodimitris 2002: 180). I have kept this remark apart because it highlights Psycharis's dualism, given the emphasis on science and objectivity encountered in most of his novels.

Thus there seems to be a pattern emerging both from the evaluations of Psycharis's novels and from the overlooking of these same novels in other critical assessments of his work. The novels are not well known or widely read, except by his immediate circle of fellow demoticists, and even the more objective critics seem to lose the novelist behind the evident ideological convictions being promoted through the narratives. Even though Psycharis is one of the most prolific writers of his generation – until the 1930s only Gregorios Xenopoulos had written more novels than Psycharis – his work remains fundamentally unexplored and this is in contrast to or maybe because of his significance to Modern Greek culture. As Chatzinis pointed

out: “Και θαυμάζουμε στο τέλος το λογοτέχνη Ψυχάρη – μ’ ένα θαυμασμό που του αξίζει –, αλλά δεν ξέρουμε για ποιαν από τις καταπληκτικές αποτυχίες του” (1943: 46). Even if we do not entirely agree with Chatzinis’s remark, there seems to be some poignant kernel of truth in it.

Nevertheless, the weaknesses on which most critics have focused define Psycharis’s Greek novels overall: the promulgation of the author’s beliefs at the expense of plot and characterisation, the ensuing didacticism, and the confessional, often self-enhancing autobiographical tendency. Furthermore, a defining feature of the novels is the contradictory tendencies apparent in their construction: even though there is an effort to analyse the thoughts and motives of characters, they represent symbolic constructs; and despite the allegorical nature of the writing, the author seeks to entertain his readers at the same time. Nothing sums up these contradictions better than the words of the author himself, who suggested in his dedication of *Cadeau de Noces* (1893), to Anatole France that: “si je vous parle aujourd’hui de cette façon, c’est pour avoir le droit de me contredire un jour” (Psychari 1893a: v). As a result, these contradictory elements will be the focus of my analysis, which aims to fill a gap in the evaluation of the author’s Greek novels.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. The aims and structure of the thesis

Psycharis’s novels are all ‘exemplary narratives’ which aim to present the views of the author to readers in an unambiguous and insistent manner. Their objective is to set out the author’s ideas on culture and to function as examples of what Greek literature should be. It is because they reflect the author’s cultural values and his

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<sup>32</sup>I will be looking at Psycharis’s novels because this is the genre most cultivated by the author in Greek and in French. References to short stories, plays or his poetry, will be made in order to elucidate a point in the analysis or a recurring theme/pattern which suggests the author’s cultural plan.

desire to promulgate them to the point of being obsessed with the need to persuade, that Psycharis's Greek novels have been described as 'didactic'.

"Didactic narrative" is an umbrella-term, which comprises philosophical tales, allegories, parables and thesis novels (*romans à thèse*).<sup>33</sup> Even though all novels – unavoidably – propose a certain world-view, 'didactic narratives' in particular seem to exemplify Julia Kristeva's claim in *Le Texte du Roman* that "one of the laws of the novel is that before being a story, [it] is an instruction, a form of teaching, a knowledge to be transmitted" (1970: 21-2). Didactic narratives per se, clearly promote a very definite world-view, a belief system or specific strands of knowledge and the relevant associations regarding the fields examined. More than any other type of novel, they presuppose a participating and acquiescent reader; their aim is to convince the reader of something by leading him/her, manipulating his/her reactions and aiming to predict his/her engagement with them. The author of a didactic narrative is a reader himself/herself first, because it is only by assuming the role of the reader or at least by imagining being in this role that, he/she is able to attempt to influence the readership with his/her views.

It is significant that this function of reading becomes a theme in some of Psycharis's novels: in *Ta Duo Adérphia* (1910-1), the unpublished *H Níkeh tou Pónou kai της Αγάπης* (1914), and *Ta Duo Triantáφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921). The narrator of *Ta Duo Adérphia* undertakes to present the story of his brother as he had heard it from his faithful lover and through reading the brother's diary; as the recipient of the story, he recreates it, together with his own. In *H Níkeh tou Pónou kai της Αγάπης* the

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<sup>33</sup>The term *roman à thèse* was coined in 1904 (Suleiman 1993: 3). It was a form practised by writers as important in their time as Barrès and Bourget, Nizan, Aragon, Malraux, Mauriac (ibid: xiii). It is interesting, however, that the writers who practised the genre felt obliged to condemn it or dissociate themselves from it. As Singer points out, "Bourget, hurt when critics accused him of doing thesis novels, preferred to call his new genre the *roman à idées*" and he explained the difference as a question of 'judgement', depending on how much a novel is "rigged to prove a point", which makes it 'bad' as opposed to the "legitimate literature of ideas" (1976: 27-8).

narrator receives his brother's notebooks, a kind of diary describing his adventures, and while he 'reads' it, he is also presenting it, together with his own story, to the prospective readers of his text. In *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (in both novellas) the two main characters exchange love letters and are both readers and writers at the same time, a reflection of the activity of reading by the actual readers. Furthermore, the role of the readers is stressed again by the narrator of the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, who points out that the value of a narrative remains unappreciated until it finds its readership: "δε σώνει εσύ ναγαπάς τη Μούσα, μήτε και η Μούσα να σ'αγαπά· θέλει και γύρω της να την αγαπούνε. Θέλει μ'άλλα λόγια, και δημόσιο κι αναγνώστες" (in Psycharis 1910-1: 80). Thus the didactic narrative expounds knowledge based on the needs of a specific readership, or at least what the author judges to be their needs. Psycharis's novels can be defined as 'didactic narratives', which either have a specific 'thesis' to propose (as in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*) or attempt to present general knowledge about life. The intention to transmit specific propositions regarding Greek language and literature, and ideas about the scientific advances of the period, indicates that these narratives are imbued with the author's cultural values.

In defining the term 'culture' one must be very cautious. "Nothing is more indeterminate than [this word], and nothing more deceptive than its application to all nations and periods", wrote Herder in his unfinished *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1784-91) (cited in Williams 1983: 89). About a century later, in 1871, the influential anthropologist Edward B. Tylor wrote that, "Culture or civilisation taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Greenblatt 1990: 225).<sup>34</sup> According to

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<sup>34</sup>For an analysis of the term 'culture', and its applications see Raymond Williams 1983: 87-93.

Williams, “the important adjective cultural appears to date from 1870 [and] it becomes common by the 1890s” (1983: 92).

In Psycharis’s case as well, his cultural values are reflected in a series of ideas relating to matters regarding Greek language and literature, Greek and European lifestyles, the character of the Greeks and other Europeans, general philosophical beliefs on what constitutes a society, on advances in knowledge of science, medicine, and art.<sup>35</sup> In particular the Greek language problem was a central issue in Psycharis’s work, both fiction and non-fiction, throughout his life. His linguistic plan was a very large part of his cultural views and defined the way he viewed literature – as will be analysed in Chapter One. Psycharis believed in the evolutionary process and supported the spoken Greek of his time as the only true, natural language deriving from Ancient Greek. His ideas are mainly expressed in his *Essais de Grammaire Historique Néo-Grecque* (1886-1889). The author wanted to translate the ‘spoken’ language into literary texts and his own novels were part of this plan.<sup>36</sup>

Psycharis’s cultural values were the result of his particular background: how he grew up, the fact that he lived in Paris all his adult life, the influential circles in which he moved and his own personality and idiosyncratic characteristics. Accordingly, in his Greek novels, the reader will find ideas which refer to both the European context, to which he belonged through his education, profession, residence and marriage, and the Greek one of which he was part because of his family, his formative years in Constantinople, and above all because he had made it his chosen area of study, and

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<sup>35</sup>It is significant that in his dedication of the book *Cadeau de Noces* to Anatole France, Psycharis refers on occasion to Greek characteristics, in a condescending tone that is not very flattering for the Greeks: “L’âme de mes Grecs vous a peut-être intéressé à cause de cela. Elle offre certains contrastes avec l’âme de nos contemporains du boulevard” (Psychari 1893a: ii) and “Mes Grecs ne sont pas gens très subtils. Ils ont des sentiments entiers. Au fond, je crois qu’ils n’établissent aucune distinction entre l’amour sensuel et l’autre amour” (ibid: vi).

<sup>36</sup>On the Greek language question see Beaton’s analysis in 1994: 13-16. As Stergiopoulos pointed out in his analysis of Psycharis’s work: “[ἡ]θελε βέβαια με τα πεζά του να εφαρμόσει έμπρακτα τις γλωσσικές του θεωρίες” (1986: 138).

built his literary oeuvre around it. It is significant that his most influential work, *To Taξίδι μου*, which exemplifies the centrality of Greek literature in his visionary plans, was written only in Greek, and was never translated into French, whereas his next novel, *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, which presented more general ideas about the role of science, was written simultaneously in both languages.

The ideas presented in the novels involve social, political, and philosophical issues, in short the author's 'Weltanschauung', also corresponding to Bourget's 'literature of ideas' (op. cit. note 33) attempting to generate debate about the use of correct language, the development of Greek literature, and what defines 'Greeknness', as opposed to French or European characteristics. Finally, there is an emphasis on the importance of literature as a means of cultural reform.

The self-referentiality of the novels means that they repeatedly focus the reader's attention on the act of writing fiction, the importance of literature, what makes it possible to produce an incomparable work of art, and what inspires the writer to achieve his/her creative potential within the context of fiction. These novels thematise their own process of production and alert readers to the fictionality of what they are reading. If it were not for the fact that André Gide's *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* was not published until 1926 we might almost see Psycharis's brand of fiction as imitating Gide's self-conscious narrative.<sup>37</sup>

*Les Faux-Monnayeurs* is the most intricate case of a self-conscious narrative. Furthermore, the term *mise en abyme*, which dates back to 1893, was coined by Gide to "highlight those elements in the text which reproduce in miniature the work's

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<sup>37</sup>As Alexandra Samouil points out, even though the internal mirroring of a text, had always existed in literature, it was Gide's systematic use of the technique and the theoretical analysis attempted in 1893, in his *Journal 1889-1939*, that established him as the expert, if not the creator, of the technique (1998: 170, my translation). See also Jean Ricardou, "Le récit abymé", in *Le Nouveau Roman suivi de Les Raisons de l'Ensemble*, Paris: Seuil, 1990, pp. 60-85.



overall patterns or themes [...] By the token of self-reflexivity the novel affirms itself as a tightly ordered literary artefact generating its own internal necessity in defiance of the haphazardness and contingency of the real” (Walker 1997: 141). Psycharis uses a variation on the *mise en abyme* device and a similar pattern emerges in some of his novels. For example, the main character in the second novella of *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* is a writer who writes a collection of poetry with almost the same title as Psycharis’s novella (*Το Τριαντάφυλλο*), while in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* one of the two brothers of the title writes a novel entitled *Ο Αδερφός* which is praised by another fictional writer, Kostopoulos (in reality Kostis Palamas). In *Αγνή* too there is a mirroring of the activity of writing, with some of the work of the fictional writer being included in the actual novel (Andreas, the main character writes a play where the main character is another writer writing a play and so on).

Overall, the self-referential aspect in Psycharis’s novels indicates a confessional tone with a self-enhancing tendency. The narrator and/or the main character is usually an intellectual: a linguist in *Το Ταξίδι μου*, a prolific writer in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, an educator personified in Myriella in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (while the captain in the same novel functions as the author’s mouthpiece and as a ‘competent reader’ evaluating Defoe’s novel, *Robinson Crusoe*), and finally a professor of classical philology in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα*. In the unpublished novel, *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης*, there is also a diarist and a reader. Other essential features of self-consciousness are the carefully arranged references to poems, theatrical or musical terms, above all in *Αγνή* or the overt allusion to other texts like *Philoctetes* in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα*. Material from one novel is presented in another. A poem included in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (Psycharis 1910-1: 399) is referred to as ‘pitifully translated by Psycharis’ in his subsequent novel *Αγνή* (Psycharis 1930a: 116 & 1912-3: 69). It must



be pointed out though that this self-referentiality is not “a trick without rewards”, as Boyd puts it (1983: 44); its purpose is to set out the author’s views on literature, and on how a novel should be constructed. The microcosm inhabited by novelists, with its own rules and significance, as opposed to the ‘real world’, is portrayed clearly in the following quotation from *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*: “Τότες ανταμώθηκα με τον Κωστόπουλο στην οδό Σταδίου. Τον πήρα και πήγαμε στο βιβλιοπωλείο της Αθηνάς. Όσο έβραζε ο κόσμος όξω στο δρόμο, άλλο τόσο έβραζε μέσα η φιλολογική μας παρέα” (Psycharis 1910-1: 249, the emphasis as it is in the text).

The fact that the author’s cultural views inform the content of the novels constitutes one aspect of their didacticism. However, the didactic mode is created through intertextuality, reader-response awareness, reinforced presence of the author, a concern with conveying the ‘truth’, allegorical writing and symbolism, and metafictional strategies. (Didacticism as a mode will be outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis). A combination of the author’s cultural views and some of the narrative tropes that create the didactic function also contributes to the self-referential character of the novels. Thus this thesis will examine the novels following the division into ‘ideological content’ and ‘narrative content’ meaning narrative techniques based broadly on the methodological model proposed by Suleiman in her book: *Authoritarian Fictions: The Ideological Novel as a Literary Genre* (1993). Suleiman’s analysis draws upon the insights of recent advances in critical theory which will also be reflected in the present thesis.

In my first chapter, I shall examine Psycharis’s views on language and how they have informed his literary theory. I will discuss the importance he gives to prose fiction and his distinction between ‘narration’ and ‘telling’ and the emphasis on

folktales. The author's literary theory is part of his intention to promulgate his view through the novels, and defines the didactic strategies used in his novels.

In the second chapter I shall discuss these didactic strategies analytically, following Susan Suleiman's model (op.cit.) and offer examples from each of the novels examined. I will also analyse Psycharis's short story *Ο Μάγος* (1892) because it functions as a model of the author's cultural views, and because its allegorical style is part of the didactic mode that defines the novels.

In the Chapters Three to Eight, I shall analyse the novels in chronological order by year of publication, except in Chapter Six, which analyses three novels taking the date of the most prominent one, *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907). In the same chapter I have included the novellas *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (written in 1899 and serialised in 1921) and the unpublished *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914) because of the views expressed, which exemplify a provocative stance, as in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα*.

In Chapter Three, I shall analyse the symbolic text *Το Ταξίδι μου* (1888). I shall discuss how a playful mode of writing created mainly through intertextual allusions, contributes to the didactic aims of the narrative. I shall discuss in particular the religious and folktale references and the illusion of polyphony and explore how these features were used to promote the author's views on Greek language and culture.

In Chapter Four I shall discuss the objectives of the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897) which sought to stress the importance of literature and assure it an equal footing with science. I shall suggest that the author thematised some of the intrinsic elements of evolutionary theory in this novel, in order to understand human nature, in particular, through differences in French and Greek society.

In Chapter Five I shall discuss the significance of the rewriting of a classic novel (Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*) in a Greek context. I shall discuss the author's

views as presented in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904) regarding the importance of living in society, language acquisition and loss (in relation to the Greek language), and the notions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ that are prominent in the narrative.

In Chapter Six I will examine three texts which can be viewed as examples of the author’s provocative/lurid writing: *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου: Του Θύμη τα Τριαντάφυλλα* and *Το Τριαντάφυλλο του Κωστή* (1921), and the unpublished novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914). In these texts the author stresses the importance of ‘truth’ in a fictional narrative. I shall analyse the forms this concept of ‘truth’ takes in all three texts, and explore to what extent the rather provocative writing functions as a didactic strategy.

In Chapter Seven I shall discuss the author’s attempts to describe the true ‘Greek soul’ and identity through the story of two brothers who happen to travel, the one through various parts of Greece, the other in Europe, in the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1910-11). I shall also analyse his views on poetic inspiration, the importance of culture and literature, and the symbol of the woman as Muse. In this novel the author was celebrating the power of the intellect on the one hand, and the emotional strength on the other that exists in abundance in those who use their inspiration creatively.

In Chapter Eight I will examine the concept of the ‘self’ as the inspiration for writing fiction with a view to exploring the extent to which the autobiographical tendency contributes to the didactic objectives of a novel. Furthermore, I will discuss how successful the projection of the writer/character as a role model was, and the importance of the questions raised in the narrative as to ‘what is literature?’ and ‘what is involved in artistic creation?’.

In the Appendix I have included Psycharis's unpublished introduction to [the manuscript of] *Ta Δvo Adέpφia* (1903), which never became part of the editions that followed (1910-11 and 1955).

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE AUTHOR'S VIEWS ON LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

Psycharis explored the role of literature and the mission of the literary writer extensively in his writing, in particular, in relation to the Greek cultural context, emphasising the importance of prose fiction in the cultural development of the nation. Not only is this a recurring theme in the author's work, but it was also a constituent of his linguistic theory, since in his view the development of literature was closely linked to and dependent on the development of language. As a linguist, Psycharis supported the adoption of everyday language, the use of the vernacular, together with its phonology, even in written texts. His major ambition was to impose his linguistic ideas on Greek culture and this objective permeated all aspects of his work, especially his writing of novels.

This chapter discusses the author's literary theory in conjunction with his views on the Greek language. Psycharis's views on literature are expressed both in his essays – most of which are collected in his 5-volume *Ρόδα και Μήλα* – in his novels (and in the introductions or afterwords to some of his novels) and in the numerous letters that he wrote to his friend Eftaliotis. In this chapter, I am going to consider the most prominent of these views and try to define the literary theory of which they form part. In my analysis of the novels in the chapters that follow, I will also refer to the author's cultural views as expressed in the individual novels.

In his numerous essays dedicated to linguistic matters, Psycharis refers to the dualistic division that existed at the time in Greece: the opposition between the supporters of *katharevousa*, who advocated a return to the past with an emphasis on the 'written' form of the language, and those who supported the demotic, the language

of the people, and wished to see it used in literature as well as in official documents. Psycharis proposed adopting a language which was to be as faithful as possible to that spoken by the people. At the same time he suggested that those who did not hold the same views were cultivating a language outside the social reality. Furthermore, he contradicted assumptions that *katharevousa* demonstrated the cultural continuity between the modern Greeks and their ancient forebears and, therefore, with the glory of the Greek past. He claimed instead, that the adoption of the spoken language in poetry and in works of prose fiction was an indication of progress for the nation, of liberation from the constraints of its past. In Psycharis's view, it was the demotic language that represented the true link with the culture of the ancestors through the evolutionary process. As he pointed out in the introduction to the novel *Ta Avo Adérφia* – written in 1903 and dedicated to Mrs. Katia Episkopopoulos, the wife of N. Episkopopoulos – the importance of the language of the people was paramount for the development of Greek literature: “[...] [Ο] σκλάβος ο Ρωμιός νοιώθει μέσα του την ανάγκη να πείση τον κόσμο πως βαστάει από προγόνους ξακουστούς, από γένος θεϊκό. Νομίζει πως με την καθαρέβουσα ταποδείχνει, αφού την πιστέβει πως είναι σαν άλλη αττική, τουλάχιστο σαν άλλη αρχαία, γιατί ακόμα δεν ξέρει, δεν έμαθε ακόμα, και δε βλέπει πως η δημοτική μόνη θα τον τιμήση σα μοναχοκόρη της αρχαίας που είναι” (Psycharis 1903a: κζ’).<sup>1</sup>

The author considered the correct form of language as an issue relevant to the development of the Greek nation. He invites readers to think about the national significance of the language question, suggesting that the existence of a national

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<sup>1</sup>This introduction is unpublished. It prefaces the manuscript of 1903, numbered 4976, in the Benaki Library. The novel was reworked between 1908 and 1911 according to the author's admission in the first edition in 1910-1. This edition, as well as the subsequent one edited by Nikiphoros Vrettakos for Makedonikes Ekdoseis, 1955, omits the introduction, keeping only the dedication to Mrs. Episkopopoulos (the introduction is included in the Appendix).

language was the best indication of cultural progress in a nation: “Μα κ’ η γλώσσα είναι πολιτισμός, αφού γλώσσα εθνική βλέπουμε παντού, όξω από την Ελλάδα” (1902a: 25).<sup>2</sup> Thus according to Psycharis, the first essential requirement for Greek prose fiction was the existence of a national language used and understood by all people.

The tensions between two rival versions of Modern Greek, the *katharevousa* and the demotic language, were difficult to resolve, particularly since the aim of the demoticists was to supplant *katharevousa* in written use with a form of language which had mainly been encountered in speech until then, thus creating a whole controversy as to what was appropriate for each type of communication. The use in writing would imply a certain status of authority and permanence that would elevate the language used into the true national language. It was relevant to the language controversy that developments in linguistics gradually helped to bring to the forefront the importance of the spoken form of language. Psycharis had been influenced by Saussure’s linguistic theory and his suggestions, therefore, in matters of language and literature were not the claims of an overenthusiastic nationalist but were based on a methodology. Psycharis’s emphasis on the importance of the spoken form of language was based to some extent on Saussure’s theories. The development of the ‘Neogrammarian’ theory and Saussure’s *Cours* stressed the importance of the ‘spoken’ language for exploring language (Saussure 1978: 114-19 & 128). These developments provided a fruitful model for the study of the Greek language.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>See also Psycharis 1902b: 16-22.

<sup>3</sup>I must explain why I think it is necessary to consider Saussure’s influence on Psycharis’s ideas. Babiniotis (1994: 79-82) and Kriaras (1981: 274) both mention the instructive influence of Saussure on Psycharis. Saussure was teaching in Paris during the years 1881 to 1891 (Culler 1976: 15). During that time Psycharis held the Chair of Modern Greek Studies (from 1885). Although Saussure developed his theory after his stay in Paris, when he was teaching in Geneva, (see Philippaki-Warbuton 1988: 35), it is reasonable to believe that most of the material in the *Cours* would have been presented or discussed,



Psycharis had conducted his linguistic research in villages in Chios, and other parts of Greece, in 1886, as is attested in the narrative *To Taξίδι μου*. He insisted on using a faithful transcription of the spoken language, including its pronunciation, in writing. Saussure's courses may have provided him with a more systematised theoretical model for examining the language. Moreover, he understood that the use of the demotic in prose texts could exert an influence on the dissemination and reception of his cultural views, arguing that the spoken language finds its fulfilment when it becomes writing, while a textual form of language not used in speech, remains only an expression of the past. He insisted accordingly on the importance of prose fiction written in demotic in all his work, most notably in *To Taξίδι μου*: “Το πρώτο θεμέλιο είναι η γις· μόνο με τέτοια βάση, κατορθώνει κάτι να κάμη ένας λαός. Θέλει όμως και γλώσσα δική του, γλώσσα καινούρια κι όχι παλιά· μόνο με τέτοια γλώσσα, βγάζει εθνική φιλολογία κ’ έχει σωστή λεφτεριά, ανεξαρτησία αλάκαιρη” (Psycharis 1993: 201).<sup>4</sup> Psycharis did not associate written language exclusively with *katharevousa* but tried to prove that the spoken language of ordinary people was also suitable for use in

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in one form or another, during his lessons in Paris. Saussure was already an established linguist when he went to Paris after his studies in Germany. There, he was active in the Société Linguistique de Paris “and a major formative influence on the younger generation of French linguists” (Culler 1976: 15). Psycharis frequented the same ‘Société’, and it is reasonable to assume that, in a period when the linguistic discipline was fast gaining scientific credence, most of Saussure’s ideas would have been discussed already with his colleagues. It is worth mentioning Psycharis’s dedication to Ferdinand de Saussure, of his article: “Doublets Syntactiques” from *Quelques Travaux de Linguistique, de Philologie et de Littérature Helléniques* (1884-1928), where he noted that he had followed Saussure’s courses: “C’est par Saussure – dont j’avais suivi les cours et qui m’honorait de son amitié – que je fus mis au courant de ce qu’un doublet syntactique comporte d’applications en linguistique. – Il avait accepté ma dédicace” (Psycharis 1930: 115 & 115n). It seems likely, therefore, that in the climate of the time, Psycharis would have absorbed Saussure’s ideas. Furthermore, we find elements that refer directly to significant components of Saussure’s theory in Psycharis’s writings about language. Psycharis repeatedly mentions the idea that a language is a ‘grammatical system’, and he suggests that it is exactly this conception of language that distinguishes an advanced linguistic examination from a rudimentary one (see 1902b: 64). He used this concept to defend the translation of the Gospels into Modern Greek; his intention was to argue in defence of the translation that language is not only words but a complete system: “Φοβούμαι μήπως και μας λείπουνε γενικές ιδέες· αφτό είναι το κακό, είναι ίσως και το μόνο. Κοιτάζουμε τις λέξεις· δεν κοιτάζουμε τη γραμματική· δεν καταλαβαίνουμε πως η γλώσσα δεν είναι λέξεις, παρά σύστημα σωστό” (1907b: 135, the emphasis as it is in the text).

<sup>4</sup>His defence of the long novel *H Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907) was built along these lines too; the author defended it as a sample of writing in demotic, which was required in order to enrich Greek literature, thus absolving it of all its faults (see Chapter Six).

literary and other texts, aiming to turn this spoken language into the national language:

[...] όσο δε γράφηκε μια ζωντανή γλώσσα, τόσο πιο έφκολα προχωρεί, δηλαδή αλλάζει και χαλνά. Ο λόγος είναι απλός κι αμέσως φαίνεται. Κάθε γλώσσα μεταμορφώνεται, μόνο που μιλιέται. Για να σταθή, πρέπει κανείς να τη σταματήσει όχι για πάντα, μα τουλάχιστο για μερικά χρόνια. Τους τύπους που κάθε μέρα περνούν από το στόμα και τρέχουν, πρέπει να βρεθή ένας να τους καθίση στο χαρτί κ' έτσι, με κάποιο τρόπο, να τους κόψη το δρόμο. Όταν το κατορθώση, τότες στέκονται για μια ώρα. Τέτοιο πράμα, μόνο τα βιβλία το καταφέρνουν. Ένας ποιητής ή ένας πεζογράφος παίρνει τους ζωντανούς, τους δημοτικούς τύπους της γλώσσας που μιλιέται στον καιρό του· τους δίνει με τα έργα του βάση και χώμα, κ' έτσι τους ριζώνει μέσα στη μνήμη των ανθρώπων. Καταντούν τύποι κλασσικοί (1902b: 111, the emphasis as it is in the text).

As is apparent from the above extract, Psycharis proposed to consolidate in literature the language spoken by the people of any given nation. The author was consistent in his views, connecting the development of the language of the people with a national cultural regeneration, throughout his work: “Η κρίσιμη ώρα για ένα έθνος είναι η ώρα που αρχίζει και γράφει τα πεζά. Το παρατήρησε αφτό ένας φιλόσοφος μεγάλος – και το βλέπουμε σήμερα στην Ελλάδα” (1907b: 254).<sup>5</sup>

Furthermore, in most of his essays he emphasised the importance of phonetics, insisting that ordinary people’s pronunciation should be the norm for the agreed standard form of Greek. In other words, Psycharis contended that it was necessary to examine the pronunciation of the people and to propose norms based on this, and, in a second stage, to translate the spoken language into a textual form:

<sup>5</sup>A few years after *Το Ταξίδι μου* (1888), in the introduction of *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1903) (op.cit.), he had expressed the same argument: “Δεν το βρίσκετε τόντις σημαντικό; άμα έγινε μια Ελλάδα, να φανούνε αμέσως τόσοι ποιητάδες, αμέσως να γράφεται η γλώσσα η εθνική; ποίηση και γλώσσα, θα πη νους. Χωρίς αφτά έθνος δεν υπάρχει και λιγώτερο από κάθε άλλο θα υπάρξη το έθνος το ελληνικό [...]” (Psycharis 1903a: κζ’).

[...] εμείς που με σέβας, που με αγάπη, που με πατριωτισμό και με λατρεία, προσέχουμε στη γραμματική, προσέχουμε στο τυπικό, προσέχουμε στους ήχους του λαού, για να μιμηθούμε, στην τεχνητή μας γλώσσα – ναι! ας τη λένε, σα θέλουνε και τεχνητή – τη γλώσσα που ζη και που μιλιέται (1902b: 19-20).

Psycharis referred to the description of the linguistic system in a specific temporal context and extended his description to linguistic standardisation, which would involve an intervention from someone of authority, such as an intellectual or more specifically a prose writer.<sup>6</sup> He also reflected upon the great responsibility a writer of literature had, to make choices that would not corrupt the speech of ordinary people in his efforts to systematise it:

Τους κανόνες της γραμμένης μας της δημοτικής, βέβαια, δεν μπορώ να ταναιρέσω πως τους κάνω, αφού έκαμα το *Ταξίδι*. Όσο δε γράφηκε μια γλώσσα ή αν προτιμάς, όσο η γραφή της δεν ταχτοποιήθηκε, ανάγκη εκείνος που την πρωτογράφει, να την ταχτοποιήσει, να την κανονίσει, πιο σωστά να το πούμε, ανάγκη να *διαλέξει*. *Διάλεξα* (1907b: 281) [...] Κοινή γλώσσα, κανονική, θα κάμουμε μόνο διαλέγοντας (1907b: 290).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Psycharis's views on linguistic analysis can be explained through Saussure's 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' system. The study of changes in language over a period of time has been called diachronic. The important developments in linguistics came with the shift to the synchronic study of the systematic interrelations between the components of a single language, at a particular time. The synchronic study of a system is related to the examination of grammatical phenomena, while the diachronic study describes the historical evolution that takes place. According to Saussure's theory, "historical change originates [...] in linguistic performance, in *parole*, not in *la langue*" (Culler 1976: 41). However, even though historical change originates in linguistic performance, it is only when these changes, which occur in 'spoken' language, are encountered in writing, that they become accepted as part of the system of each period. When they are encountered in writing, it is evident that they do not simply represent something idiosyncratic or dialectal but a more general and widespread alteration. Psycharis's insistence on a synchronic examination of the Greek language was related to his plan to provide examples of the correct demotic in use.

<sup>7</sup>In linguistics, nevertheless this passage betrays a problematic supposition: the question was to what extent the study of the spoken language could result in 'fixing' it in a specific time, and furthermore, to what extent, the desire and the need to promote a plan for standardising the Greek language could lead to or allow linguistic interventions in the system that could not be accounted for methodologically.

This is in contrast to what he had written earlier in *To Taξίδι μου* (1993: 123). It seems that as the years passed by, Psycharis took more liberties with regards to language. These interventions, however, gave Psycharis's opponents the opportunity to attack the artificiality of his language. The author insisted on the necessity of describing the linguistic phenomena encountered in spoken language and of making the relevant choices accordingly, choices he hoped would be adopted by other writers. Thus, there are three main points in Psycharis's views on the language of literature: the need to adopt the language of ordinary people, to maintain the pronunciation they used, and to make the language widely accepted through the creation of prose written in it. However, he was criticised for using an artificial language in his own novels (see Xenopoulos's review of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* in *Panathinaia*, 1905, vol. Θ': 375-77).

Psycharis's views on the adoption of the spoken form of language and on the role of the novelist as grammarian, who helps promote the standardisation of linguistic forms by proposing the necessary changes, find direct application in his theory on Greek literature.<sup>8</sup> A conspicuous example of this theory in practice is his story *O Máγος* (1892), which will be examined in the next chapter. The story was written in order to exemplify the author's views on language and literature, using Psycharis's favourite literary model, the folktale. Psycharis envisioned the creation of an 'oral literature' with his works of prose fiction. I will explain what he meant by 'oral literature'.

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<sup>8</sup>The grammarian examines language and describes the rules of its use (see Collins English Dictionary 1997: 732-33). In Psycharis's terminology, 'grammarians' are viewed in a positive light because they are mainly demoticist writers. In contrast, the term 'teachers' has a derogatory and restrictive connotation. It refers only to the writers of *katharevousa*, who study ancient texts and try to apply the language in which they are written in their own written work. In Psycharis's theory the grammarian is like the magician of his short-story *O Máγος*, he precipitates changes for the better in language and culture and helps consolidate them.

In his texts in *Ρόδα και Μήλα*, as well as in *Το Ταξίδι μου*, the author designated the Homeric epics as supreme literary masterpieces, and singled them out for two characteristics in particular: because they resembled folktale narratives, and because of the language used which achieve immediacy in the narration. It is interesting that in *Το Ταξίδι μου*, the narrator discusses with a local Chiot the existence of an historical ‘Homer’, and suggests that the epics did not derive from a written source but from the plurality of people’s voices which slowly converged into a unified form (Psycharis 1993: 116-17). The fact that the Homeric language was the spoken language of the period, with many different registers, and not a learned creation, supported the claim. This in turn, connected the ancient epics with Greek folk songs, as both genres were similarly composed and with the same aspirations (see also Chapter Three).

An ‘oral literature’ in the Homeric period, implied something which was usually recited and performed (Psycharis 1993: 116). It is reasonable to assume that the repetition and performance resulted, in time, in a “more integrated and less fragmented kind of language” (Chafe 1982: 52).<sup>9</sup> These developments suggested a process of transference of oral features into a more stable form, which was the inevitable result of having to meet audience expectations. Consequently, the appeal of the myth of the creation of the Homeric epics was the process of ‘standardisation’ of a spoken language into a literate form. Even though the Homeric epics were written much later than the time in which their stories are set, the ritualistic process of standardisation that slowly made their language more uniform and predictable, approximated Psycharis’s model for the development of Greek literature. The myth of

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<sup>9</sup>This study examines the ‘oral literature’ of Seneca, an Iroquois language spoken in western New York State; its findings are significant in confirming a similarity between ‘ritual’ language and ‘written’ language.

the creation of the epics, which exhibit features of both the oral and the written language, is directly comparable with Psycharis's plan to standardise the language of everyday life into a stable form through the production of literary texts.

The genre which best suited these tentative approaches was the folktale, a genre which can constantly be re-created in the process of narration. Not surprisingly, Psycharis claimed that *To Taξίδι μου* was a folktale: “το βιβλίο μου είναι παραμύθι, όχι ταξίδι” (1993: 39) and he referred to the Homeric epics using the same term (ibid: 117). The author favoured the folktale for its themes derived from popular tradition, and for its technique of including features of an oral narrative, even when it is a written text. He also claimed that the Homeric epics were like Greek folk songs because of the collective character of their creation (ibid). By appropriating the folktale and its technique, Psycharis was attempting to elevate the popular, marginalised culture into a dominant one, emphasising the people's language, and folk songs as products of the authentic Greek soul. To summarise the points made so far, Psycharis's linguistic views played a formative role in the evolution of his observations on the scope and role of Greek literature. In order to achieve his aims, the author was aware of the need to create written literature in the demotic.

The major task that he undertook to complete, partly by his own efforts and partly through his exhortations to his fellow demoticist writers, was in need of a supportive literary canon on which it could follow. By adopting and promoting the Homeric epics, the folktales, and the folk songs, he went some way towards fulfilling this aim. By claiming Homer as the literary precursor of all those who wrote in the vernacular, through the mediation of the folk songs and the folktales, the author was also aiming to enhance the value of his own narratives by implying a certain continuity with the ‘authority’ of the ancient texts and with modes of narration such as



the still current folktales. In this way, Psycharis translated Homer into his everyday present (Leontis 1991: 197).

In accordance with his belief in the importance of the spoken language, the author admired the style of ancient Greek writers, whose work exemplified simplicity and resembled an everyday conversation. Indeed he singled this quality out as one of the most important features in a work of prose. He argued that this simplicity was a characteristic of Plato's work, and he awarded Plato an exalted place in the line of precursors he tried to establish for the demoticist literature: “Εγώ θαρρώ πως η αρχαία η Ελλάδα ζη πάντα, γιατί κι ο Πλάτωνας, σα δε γελιέμαι, το είχε και το ήθελε το ύφος το κουβεντιάρικο, ταπλό, που καμιά γλώσσα στον κόσμο δεν μπόρεσε ποτέ της να ταρπάξει τόσο ταιριαχτά που να το κάμη και δικό της” (1902b: 49). Features of orality encountered in the author's own novels include the repetitive style, a familiar tone with frequent apostrophising of the reader and a loose adherence to the plot, with a lot of digressions that serve once more to foreground the author's linguistic views. Psycharis admired the unpretentious writing and tried to reproduce it in his novels by using a language close to the vernacular and a familiar register that resembled a conversation between the writer and his readers. It is significant that the main character of the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, a fictional writer, was given qualities which the author thought of as essential for the role of the intellectual: “Κι ο Γιαννίρης κουβέντιαζε, όλο κουβέντιαζε. Τους μιλούσε σαν πατέρας τους, σα φίλος. Κ' έμοιαζε τόσο φυσικό, τόσο απονήρεφτο, τόσο άφοβο το ύφος της ουράνιας εκείνης της κουβέντας του Γιαννίρη, που τους συνεπήρε” (Psycharis 1897: 117).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>It was exactly this style of conversation, simple yet full of meaningful ideas, that Psycharis admired in his father-in-law's, Ernest Renan's, writing (see Karatzas 1988: 366).



In the chapter, “Οι αρχαίοι” from *To Taξίδι μου*, the narrator refers to the major ancient writers from Homer to Euripides, and points out that what the ancient spirit demanded from modern culture was to keep the Greek language alive through evolution and to secure the continuation of Greek literature:

Κάπου κλαίμε που δεν έρχεται κανείς. Ο Εβριπίδης, με τη μελαγχολική του ψυχή παρηγοριά δεν έχει. Ποιος θα μας μιμηθή μια μέρα; Ό,τι κάμαμε στον καιρό μας, ποιος θα το ξανακάμη στο δικό σας; Ποιος θα μιλήση γλώσσα ζωντανή σαν τη γλώσσα που μιλούμε σήμερα και μεις οι ίδιοι, για να μη φαίνεται πως κόπηκε η σειρά και δεν υπάρχει πια ελληνική φιλολογία; (Psycharis 1993: 167)

In the same chapter, Psycharis decries the type of literature that was written in his time, a product of the pompous, ‘unreal’ *katharevousa*.<sup>11</sup> In the manner of a folktale the author portrays ancient Greek writers entertaining themselves in the Theatre of Dionysos by inviting the writers of his own time to present their literary or journalistic work to them. The latter, written mainly in *katharevousa*, usually provoked the laughter and scorn of the ancients. Psycharis presents *katharevousa* as a ‘joke’ and in that particular chapter he manages to explain his linguistic theory in a playful way which extends to some self-criticism and self-effacement as well – something not frequently encountered in his works: “[τ]α χρειάστηκα κ’ έφυγα μάνη μάνη, να μη με βάλουν και μένα στη μέση [...]”, comments the narrator (ibid: 168).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup>This type of writing had previously been criticised in his *Essais de Grammaire Historique Néogrecque*: “L’ignorance de la langue moderne présente un danger bien autrement sérieux que nos puristes ne l’imaginent. Une nation, en réalité, ne tient sa place dans le monde que lorsqu’elle a une existence intellectuelle; alors seulement elle est à même d’apporter dans le domaine commun son contingent d’idées, de recevoir d’autres idées en échange. Mais ceci n’est possible qu’avec la fixation d’une langue littéraire nationale. La langue savante n’a jamais produit et elle est incapable de produire une œuvre bien faite et bien écrite. Les seules productions littéraires dignes d’entrer en ligne de compte, sont dues à la langue moderne. *L’Erotocritos*, *L’Erophile*, Solomos, Valaoritis et les auteurs populaires de nos chansons n’ont pas encore été dépassés” (Psychari 1886: 260).

<sup>12</sup>See also Chapter Three of the thesis for a discussion of this playful and subversive writing.

In addition to Plato and Sophocles, whose tragedy *Philoctetes* with its frank approach inspired the novel *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), and other ancient Greek writers mentioned in *Το ταξίδι μου*, the line of precursors that Psycharis attempted to establish for demoticist literature extended, as has already been mentioned, from Homer to writers of his own day. It included Cretan poetry and drama of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, like *Erotokritos* and *Erofili*, folk songs, and the poetry of Valaoritis and Solomos (Psycharis 1907b: 242, see also Chapter Six).<sup>13</sup> As the author explained in his essays of criticism: “L’Erophile ne marque pas seulement le plus beau moment de la littérature Crétoise: comme document linguistique, elle est le premier texte écrit en langue moderne; au XVIIème siècle, nous trouvons cette langue dans le plein développement de toutes ses formes” (Psichari 1889: 286). What these literary works from different chronological periods shared were the vernacular language, and a narrative mode which aimed at immediacy and honesty.<sup>14</sup>

It is important to mention that the author also discussed the difference between storytelling and narrative, making a rough parallel with the distinction between orality and textuality, in his introduction to the short stories *Στον ίσκιο του Πλατάνου* (1911). According to him, ‘telling’ (δήγηση as Psycharis calls it) is a task that can be carried

<sup>13</sup>It also included writers of foreign literature who wrote in the vernacular of their period, like Dante, Shakespeare, and Goethe (Psycharis 1993: 166). It is significant that Psycharis prefaces most of his novels after 1893, as well as his critical essays, even the unpublished novel, with a dictum from Dante’s *Inferno*, Canto II. The only exceptions are *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897), which has no dictum and *Typesses* (1923), which has one from Virgil. However, there is also another explanation for this preference, the fact that, when the author met Olga Valaoritis in 1893, she gave him a copy of Dante’s *Inferno*: “Του χάρισε κι αντίτυπο σημειωμένο από το χέρι της στα περιθώρια, του εθνικού της Ιταλίας του ποιητή, του λατρεμένου της του Ντάντε” (in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* 1907a, no. 238: 2). Moreover, Psycharis took inspiration from Dante for the main themes of love and glory that are apparent in most of his novels (see Psichari 1930: 397). The author discussed Dante in the essay “Pétrarque et Dante” in (Psichari 1930: 391-99).

<sup>14</sup>The element of honesty was very important for the author in his literary theory and in his life; see his ‘autobiography’, *Οι Ψυχάρηδες (Τα γενεαλογικά μου)*: “[...] Πρώτο μου μάθημα ηθικής. Μου κόλλησε ο λόγος κι από τότες θαρρώ έπαψα να τα μασώ σε οποιονεδήποτε” (Zolotas 1928: 824). In that respect, he used the concept of the faithful rendering of reality to the point of open discussion of uncomfortable things, as in the case of the novel *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), even presenting very personal issues as fiction, in the case of his novellas *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921) (see Chapter Six).

out by anyone, like repeating a story that one has heard; but the creation of a structured narrative (αφήγηση) is something more elaborate. The author also compared the relationship between the novel and the short story with that of the sun and the moon. He referred to their differences in terms of strength of ‘light’ and ‘shadow’. However, he also pointed out that in short stories, because of their brevity, all the elements in the narration had to contribute towards the end, and therefore there could be no superfluous details:

Ο Ντάντες, όταν έκανε λόγο για τον ουρανό που οι κύκλοι του είναι μικρότεροι από τους άλλους στις άλλες σφαίρες, δηλαδή για τον ουρανό του φεγγαριού, βέβαια - και το ξέρουμε - πως δεν έβαζε με το νου του το *δήγημα*, μήτε γύρευε να το συγκρίνη με το μυθιστόρημα [...]. Το μυθιστόρημα, ήλιος - και τόντις τι δεν είναι σήμερα το μυθιστόρημα, που ό,τι θέλεις το κάνεις, που φιλοσοφίες σωστές, που σωστό έθνος μέσα του είναι άξιο να χωρέση; Φεγγάρι, το *δήγημα*. Κι απαράλλαχτα όπως το φεγγάρι, ενώ δανίζεται το φως του από τον ήλιο, έχει ωστόσο δικό του φως, ύπαρξη δική του, πάντα όμως σε στενότερο κύκλο, σε πιο περιορισμένο, μα με τρόπο που μπορεί κιόλας να φωτίση καλήτερα και πιο συγκεντρωμένα κανένα μέρος, εκεί που ο ήλιος αναγκάζεται να φωτίζει όλη μαζί τη δημιουργία (Psycharis 1911: 1-2, the emphasis as it is in the text).

Psycharis thought highly of the ability to create a proper narrative and he associated the technique with the use of the spoken Greek language because, as he explained, Greek encourages a narration that appears like a conversation between the author and his/her addresses (ibid: 9), and it is easier to create a good narrative through this mode. Therefore, we see that Psycharis was preoccupied with narrative technique and its generic characteristics. He did not write many short stories though, perhaps because this genre did not allow him the freedom he wanted to express different ideas, to repeat himself and even digress from the plot, since short stories demand the

exercise of self-restraint in the narration. However, he always emphasised the importance of the novel and it was his opinion that Greek writers should cultivate that genre: “Το Δήγημα στην Ελλάδα δεν πάει αχαμνά. Μυθιστορήματα δε γενήκανε ακόμη πολλά ως τώρα. Είναι και πιο δύσκολα. Θέλουνε και δημόσιο να τα διαβάξη, κι αφτό πολύ πιο δύσκολα βρίσκεται από το μυθιστόρημα το ίδιο. Να διαβάξη ρομάντζα, θαρρεί πως μπορεί ο καθένας. Έχει άδικο. Πρέπει να είναι ξεναντίας προετοιμασμένη από χρόνια και χρόνια μια κοινωνία για τέτοια διαβάσματα” (Psycharis 1907b: 106).

Another aspect of Psycharis’s views on literature was his emphasis on the faithful rendering of reality in literary works. The representation of reality in literature had been a highly controversial issue throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth century, and success in this respect was mainly related to the language used. The prevailing custom of the time was to use the demotic in the dialogue in order to render the scenes more vivid but to use *katharevousa* for the narration of events or character description. Even Vizyenos’s language, which was less ‘difficult’ and ‘distant’ than that of other prose-writers of the period, was not consistent but varied from ‘high’ *katharevousa* to demotic (see Alexiou 1995: 292 & 296n). However, since 1896 with Karkavitsas’s novel *Ο Ζητιάνος*, which was written entirely in demotic, this policy started being abandoned in favour of the use of a language closer to demotic for the whole of the narrative. Psycharis’s aim was to prove that the demotic was capable of expressing fine distinctions and nuances of feeling, such as one might expect to find in literature, making it unnecessary to employ the ancient form of language or *katharevousa*. In order to prove his point, he undertook to write complex works of prose fiction in the vernacular, and in his scholarly essays, he argued against those who insisted that the language of the people was inappropriate for literary use:

Un critique a vivement reproché à Solomos d'avoir employé, dans une pièce célèbre, le mot κόμη, *chevelure* [...]. La même critique prend texte de ce vers pour déclarer que la langue moderne ne saurait guère devenir une langue littéraire, et pour nous apprendre que l'indigence du vocabulaire populaire ne peut suffire à l'expression des milles nuances de la pensée (1902b: 66).

According to his views, literature should be an extension of everyday existence, part of people's experience, and not something distant from it or 'exotic'. In suggesting the use of demotic for the whole of the narrative, Psycharis aimed to achieve two different aims concurrently: to produce a fictional work which would give a closer approximation of verisimilitude and to secure the involvement of readers, something that was very important for his fiction, which had specific messages to promote.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the demotic language was both a feature that was promulgated in his novels and the tool that made this promulgation more successful.<sup>16</sup>

Psycharis refers a great deal to images of water in his essays, in an attempt to establish a connection between reality and the language that renders it. These symbolic references help him emphasise his ideas without resorting to dry rhetoric. He claimed that, “η γλώσσα που γράφει κανείς πρέπει να είναι σαν το νερό της λίμνης, που όλος ο κόσμος αμέσως μπορεί να δη τον ουρανό που την έχει καθρέφτη, μα που λίγοι, πολλοί λίγοι γνωρίζουν και ξεδιαλίσανε με τι στοιχεία, με τι κύματα, κι από πού παρμένα, είναι καμωμένο το ήσυχο εκείνο της λίμνης το νερό” (1902b: 242-43).

Similarly, the creation of a national literature in the demotic is referred to once again

<sup>15</sup>Despite his proclamations about the faithful rendering of reality, Psycharis often used the conventions of verisimilitude very loosely and, as I will explain in the analysis of *To Taξίδι μου*, the didacticism and criticism of the narrative voice produced interesting results regarding the illusion of realism.

<sup>16</sup>It seems a self-evident point but the case is not so simple. Some intellectuals like Roidis, tried to promulgate the demotic language even though he did not use it in his writings. Roidis's arguments for example – no matter how well formed – would not have created an empathy with readers, as they were written in the *katharevousa* form.

in terms of a watery metaphor in the following extract, where a ‘river’ represents the formation and development of Greek literature.

Μέσα σε κάθε γλώσσα φαίνεται κι ο άνθρωπος που την έκαμε· η γλώσσα αντανakλά την ψυχή του, σαν τον ποταμό. Αλλάζουν οι τύποι, κάποτες κ’ οι λέξεις, μα οι γλώσσες μνήσκουν πάντοτες οι ίδιες. Ο ποταμός ο δικός μας απάντησε στο δρόμο που πήρε μια πόλη μεγάλη, μια αιώνια φιλολογία. Πρέπει τώρα να του χτίσουμε γρήγορα καμιά πόλη καινούρια, περίφημη σαν την πρώτη που είδε, ξαναμορφωμένη σαν τον ποταμό, για να καμαρώση το ποτάμι και τα δικά μας τα μεγαλεία (1902b: 161-2).

The ideas about faithfully representing real life in literature were certainly not original. This was a preoccupation of many Greek writers at the time, which accounts for the fact that the fiction of the period aimed above all at representing the ‘national life’ in what has been called the ‘ethographic’ mode of writing. Psycharis acknowledged this fact in his introduction to *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*: “Το ρομάντζο κατάντησε καθρέφτης που καλήτερος από ζουγραφιά, δίχως να μας κολακέψη, μας δείχνει, δείχνει στο έθνος, το πρόσωπό μας όπως είναι” (1903a: κθ’). He stressed that not only the themes and the mode of writing, but above all the language of a narrative should reflect its use in ‘real’ life.<sup>17</sup> However, pursuing his theory about a literature with features of orality, the author attempted in his last published novel *Αγνή* (1913), an innovative writing that diverged from the realist mode of representation. The innovation consisted in including musical phrases to suggest a certain atmosphere, or the feelings of characters, and in substituting music for dialogue or the description of events. In that respect, music functioned symbolically not only as a replacement for

<sup>17</sup>The ‘current state of use’, however, if taken literally, would mean the use of ancient forms or a mixed language (μικτή), which, as discussed already, did not constitute a living language according to Psycharis and could not represent ‘real’ life. Thus, Psycharis disregarded what was happening in Greece in linguistic terms and tried to present his view as if it were the norm. This attitude may be explained by the fact that he was living away from Greece (see Mackridge 1988: 40) or it may have been a deliberate device in order to establish his position as the prevailing one.



spoken language but as a higher form of language understood by all (see Chapter Eight).

It is also important to note that the language used by the characters in Psycharis's novels is generally the same. Exceptions include *Frosoula*, and the characters on the boat to Prinkipos in the novel *Ta Δvo Αδέρφια*. In particular in the latter case, the use of language is conveyed by the narrator to the reader as a negative example of speech. However, there is little attempt in Psycharis's novels to convey class origin or social status through the use of language.<sup>18</sup> This could be the result of often having the narrator describe the thoughts of other characters and their speech, instead of allowing their distinct voice to come through. In Psycharis's novels, therefore, social differences cease to matter as long as there are no linguistic differences, in accordance with his belief in a uniform national identity based on language. In line with his declarations about using the language spoken in villages by ordinary people, some characters in his novels comply with these views. For example the villagers and servants in his novels sometimes communicate between themselves using proverbial phrases of popular wisdom or even lines from folk songs, as in the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*: “Γλέπω τον ήλιο πως βουλά και το φεγγάριν κλίνει. Αμέ, το μοναχόν πουλί απόψε πού θα μείνη;” (1897: 337), or again: “Δεν είν’ καράβια στο γιαλό, δεν είν’ παννιά απλωμένα; Δεν είν’ καμιά στο πέλαο να μ’ αγαπάη και μένα;” (ibid: 390).<sup>19</sup>

One type of character which appears repeatedly in Psycharis's novels is the eminent novelist or thinker who makes literary and cultural comments or suggestions,

<sup>18</sup>Furthermore, the author often uses very vulgar expressions: “Κοίταξε, κοίταξε πού με κατάντησες! Μου την έκαμες παρτσάδες!” (Psycharis 1912-3: 5).

<sup>19</sup>In the latter case, the demotic becomes so evident that it loses its representational value. It becomes more realistic than is needed, thus the opposite of realistic.



a portrayal of himself. Around him revolve other minor characters, bureaucrats, employees or mediocre writers, who represent examples of the negative aspects of the urban life-style and of pedantic attitudes, which the author wishes to discredit.<sup>20</sup> However, for the first time in a Greek novel, there is also an abundance of servants as important characters, as was the case for example in the novels *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* and *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*. Together with the ordinary villagers, this category of characters is portrayed favourably because of the language they use and their uncomplicated behaviour, which contrasts with that of the pedantic scholars. However, the depiction of villagers differs significantly from that in the typical ‘ethographic’ narratives of the period. There is no nostalgic tone in the description of villages and villagers. If they contribute to his linguistic research they are praised, if not, they are condemned in the author’s usual colourful style (as is the case in *Το Ταξίδι μου*). The author emphasises the importance of villages, because of the dialects, and their contribution to the formation of the demotic. It must also be pointed out that in some of Psycharis’s novels there is a shifting of focus, as villagers and servants gain in importance while other ‘respectable’ characters are ‘criticised’ because of some trait that the author considers inappropriate.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>20</sup>The author’s tendency to treat his characters as ‘types’ or ‘constructions’, becomes apparent from his carelessness with their names, which, in some cases, change in the course of the narrative. For example, Kamekos-Kapekos and Andreas-Kostas in *Αγνή*, and Anna-Eleni in *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (see also Holton 1988: 66).

<sup>21</sup>The latter are the ones who either imitate European mannerisms or whose attitude proclaims a desire to return to the Greek Classical past. In his novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, the writer adopts a strong satirical tone, which at times becomes almost scornful. He particularly satirises a character called Tsigomagas or Sigomagas (to render the *katharevousa* pronunciation), perhaps an allusion to Andreas Syggros who was a national benefactor. For Psycharis, however, this character embodied the dangers of a fluid, unstable identity. Even though Tsigomagas should have been regarded as a respectable character because of his philanthropic work, he is satirised by the narrator as a devious and cunning Greek, always on the lookout for the next opportunity to reinvent himself. This is in contrast to the ordinary villagers who seemed to have attained self-awareness (see Chapter Seven, the section on Greek society and culture of the period). As this example shows, the author sets in motion a negatively valorised system through direct commentary and context, aimed against the characters or the characteristics which he wants to discredit.

In line with the author's beliefs about a uniform national identity and the task of the faithful rendering of 'reality' in literature, the role of the writer and intellectual was a complex one. Even though he has the responsibility of guiding the people, he can only achieve his task by abandoning his status and becoming himself one of the people. According to the author in an essay from *Ρόδα και Μήλα Α'*:

Εμείς όμως που γράφουμε, που κάνουμε ρομάντσα, πρέπει να συλλογιστούμε καλά τη δουλειά, να την πιάσουμε αλλιώς, γιατί εμείς δάσκαλοι δεν είμαστε· δε ζούμε στο γραφείο μας, περπατούμε στους δρόμους, γράφουμε για όλους, γράφουμε για τη ζωή, κ' έτσι πρέπει νακολουθούμε το λαό, το λαό και μόνο. Γι' αυτό είπα, και γω κι άλλοι μαζί μας, πως από τη φιολογία θα βγή φως ... (1902b: 269).<sup>22</sup>

Because of the confusion of the role of the 'grammarian' with that of the 'novelist', many of the subjects examined in Psycharis's scholarly texts appear also in his novels and vice versa. In his scholarly texts, when he examines certain linguistic phenomena in the Greek language, he often offers examples from his own fiction to demonstrate his arguments: "[...] προσέξτε, σας παρακαλώ, σε μια πολύ περίεργη χρήση της προστακτικής μας, και δώστε μου την άδεια να σας αναφέρω εδώ μια φρασούλα που χωρίς σκοπό δεν την έγραψα στη *Ζωή κι Αγάπη* [...]" (1906b: 62). Furthermore, the author analyses his characters and presents their psychology, as he would have analysed a grammatical phenomenon in the Greek language. In the novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη μοναξιά*, again, the allegorical reference: "[the] son of Homer has to learn again his speech from the daughter of Dante" (Psycharis 1991: 233), diverts readers from the plot of the novel in order to introduce them to his linguistic theory. Dante was writing in the Italian vernacular of his time, and Psycharis argued that

<sup>22</sup>See also Dragoumis 1926: 21. The last sentence of this extract can be explained as part of Psycharis's broader world-view which considered literature ('φιολογία', as it was called in the nineteenth century) a significant element of the national identity.

Dante's lessons should be adopted by Modern Greeks who, though they possessed the language of Homer, had forgotten how to speak correctly. The author admitted that both analysing language and writing novels were occupations close to his heart and whether he was right or not, he did not make any distinction between them: “Τι είμαι, γλωσσολόγος ή ψυχολόγος, επιστήμονας ή ποιητής, καλά καλά δεν το κατέχω, να σας το πω. Ίσως δεν είμαι και τίποτις. Ένα πράμα νοιώθω, πως είτε λέξη πιάνω να ψιλολογήσω είτε ανθρώπινη ψυχή, διαφορετική δουλειά δεν κάνω κι όσο η μια με συνεπαίρνει, τόσο με συνεπαίρνει κ' η άλλη” (Psycharis 1905b: 13).

It must also be pointed out that Psycharis's novels are testimonies to his tendency to linguistic standardisation. He consistently used what he considered to be the correct forms according to the grammar and the phonetics of the demotic, as he mentions in the afterword of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* for example (1991: 322-25). Furthermore, where there are several manuscript versions of the same novel, the corrections in each one also testify to the importance placed by the author on finding the correct expression.<sup>23</sup> However, nowhere is the connection between grammar and imagination more prominent than in *Το Ταξίδι μου*. In this work, Psycharis discusses linguistics alongside other theoretical issues in literary and scholarly manner at one and the same time. The aim was to achieve a successful fusion of his two preoccupations. As a result, in parts of the narrative, he claims that his book is only “imagination and poetry” (1993: 38) whereas in others, he explains that without the grammatical system, even the most successful poetry loses its feeling (1993: 178). With remarks such as these, it is obvious that the repercussions of Psycharis's linguistic theory were all pervasive in his work.

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<sup>23</sup>The documents are as follows: ms. no. 3893 first part (1902) and second part (1902-1904), 7538 in two parts (1902-1904) & 7538 typewritten, all in the Benaki Library (see also Chapter Five).

To conclude, the author's critical ability allowed him to perceive that the status of the demotic would be very feeble without the existence of a literary corpus behind it, indicating its accomplishment as a standard language. In undertaking his literary writing, Psycharis's programme was to prove that the demotic would be suitable for official texts of national significance and to supplement Greek literature with many new novels in the demotic. Some of his views on literature, in relation to realism, were in parallel with the prevalent theoretical ideas of his period, even though he did not exactly follow them in his own novel writing. The author believed realist fiction, written in the language used by ordinary people, would help reinforce the sense of belonging to a community with the aim of achieving the general cultural regeneration of the nation. It would offer a recognisable identity for people, a point of reference for what they were, individually, and as a community.<sup>24</sup> The author also believed that it was the task of the novelist to help that process materialise, thus assuming the dual role of somebody within the popular culture, one of the people, and also on the outside, able to evaluate it and endorse it: "Ένας μεγάλος συγγραφέας είναι σαν καθρέφτης· στα λόγια του μέσα ο καθένας βλέπει την ίδια του την εικόνα [...] εκεί που ο ίδιος δεν ξέρω τι μου γίνεται μέσα μου και δε βρίσκω λόγια να το πω, εκείνος με το λέει και με κάμνει να καταλάβω την ψυχή μου. Μιλεί για το λαό και σαν το λαό. Τη γλώσσα του λαού θέλει" (1902b: 156).

However, his attempt to establish the language of the people in literature, met with resistance from the Greek literary establishment.<sup>25</sup> The features that exemplify

<sup>24</sup>For an analysis of this point see Anderson 2000: 427-8.

<sup>25</sup>See the author's letters to Eftaliotis: "Μη σε μέλη· κακό δε θα βγη από τη δουλειά τους και το σκοπό το μεγάλο, που λες, δε θα μας τονέ χαλάσουνε, φτάνει εμείς να γράφουμε, φτάνει εμείς να φτειάνουμε βιβλία, φτάνει εμείς στα βιβλία μας, ας είναι και στα παραμυθάκια μας, να δείχνουμε τι θα πη τέχνη αληθινή κι αληθινή ζωή" (Karatzas 1988: 122), and in a more angry tone in another letter: "Τι γλώσσα; Αφτοί δεν έγιναν ακόμη ανθρώποι. Τους μιλείς για γλώσσα, κι αφτοί μιλούν ακόμη σαν τα ζώα" (ibid: 364).

the use of spoken language in his novels, i.e. digressions, repetitions, imitations of real-life conversations with readers, created an innovative style but one might say that, at the same time, they destroyed his fiction. They are nevertheless innovative because they raise questions about what constitutes literary writing - questions which are still significant today (see Tziovas 1987: 315-6). Inevitable they may have been, but as a result, the author's work was deemed resistant to literary analysis and appreciation.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MODES OF DIDACTIC WRITING AND THE ALLEGORICAL STORY *Ο ΜΑΓΟΣ*

The features that define the author's didacticism are encountered in most of his novels. The most common of these are the various types of intertextual references and their function. Intertextuality, primarily, creates and maintains a certain framework of meaning: if a story is to be read against or in accordance with other stories, then there is a suggestion of a specific horizon of possible interpretations. For example, the narrative *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* can be read in conjunction with *Robinson Crusoe*, which is referred to a few times in the novel and thus the reader will easily understand that the main point in Psycharis's novel relates to the ideas advanced in Defoe's novel. Secondly, most of Psycharis's novels refer to other important texts or imitate the manner of writing of other writers, in order to gain support for the arguments that they express, implying continuity with the texts referred to, as well as equivalent 'authority' gained by association with the well-established works. This is the case in the novel *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα*, which contains many quotations from Sophocles' tragedies and in particular from *Philoctetes*. Furthermore, intertextuality is used in order to show that the author was creating fiction in the fashion of the specific novels or types of narration referred to, in order to aid the reception and understanding of his work, since there was no established tradition of prose fiction at the time in Greece (see Robinson 1988: 56-7). In Psycharis's case intertextuality can also be viewed as a type of 'dialogue with himself', i.e. with his other works. This is apparent, for example, in the self-mocking reference in *Αγνή* to a poem included in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφη*. Furthermore, it functions as



a way of translating the author's cultural ideology from his critical essays to his novels, as a fusion of genres and tropes that aims to reinforce the didacticism. This is the case in particular in *To Taξίδι μου*, which combines rhetoric with imagination in a remarkable manner.

Another important element of didacticism is the role of the reader and the importance assigned to the activity of reading, since without the participation of the reader, the didacticism is not activated. It is significant that the intertextual function also reinforces the role of the reader in making sense of the text. According to Zoe Samara,

χάρη στο διακείμενο ο αναγνώστης πέφτει στην παγίδα που του στήνει το κείμενο: είναι υποχρεωμένος να πάρει μέρος στη διαδικασία της παραγωγής του κειμένου. Έτσι συνειδητοποιεί το γεγονός ότι δεν πρόκειται για απλή γραφή, αλλά για δεύτερη ή και πολλαπλή γραφή κειμένου που η διαδικασία της συντελείται από τον ίδιο. Ενώ διαβάζει το κείμενο, ανακαλύπτει συστήματα γραφής και, καθώς τα αναγνωρίζει, τα χρησιμοποιεί για να ερμηνεύσει ακόμη και τη μικρότερη λεπτομέρεια (1987: 24).

Psycharis's novels create an implied reader compliant with his views in order to suit the didactic purpose of the texts and it is often the case that the author considers the implied reader to be the same with the actual reader.<sup>1</sup> The narrator of his novels then addresses the implied reader on several occasions. For example, in the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, the implied reader is addressed as “παιδιά”, and in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, the main character ‘acts’ for his/her benefit openly addressing him/her: “τι μουρλός που είμαι, μωρέ σεις, και θα με πάρετε τώρα στο ψιλό” (1991: 62). The act

<sup>1</sup> “[...] The ‘implied reader’ [...] is established by the text itself as one who is expected to respond in specific ways to the ‘response-inviting structures’ of the text [...] the ‘actual reader’s’ [...] responses [on the other hand] are colored by his or her accumulated private experiences” (Abrams 1999: 257). Abrams refers to the distinction proposed by Iser. For more details see Iser 1974: 30-31. The term was first proposed by Wayne Booth.

of reading is thematised in the novels *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* and *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* as well as in the novella *Ζούλια*. Thus, even though the novels persistently promote a ‘monological’ outlook, there is an awareness of their recipient.<sup>2</sup> This means that they invite the response and understanding of the reader precisely through their didactic aims, their specific points and their rhetoric. It is this response that assures their success and it is this factor that often makes Psycharis complain that his work did not receive the attention that it deserved. Even if the reader of Psycharis’s novels is assumed to be compliant, according to the requirements for promoting the views expressed in the novels, their success relies on his/her engagement with the text, thus on the creation of a ‘dialogue’. However, in a rather contradictory manner, there is also a strong element of egocentric orientation. This happens because the author disguises as the narrator and sometimes as a character, and in so doing proposes a model of thought and conduct related to his own activities. For example, in *Αγνή* most of the events are fictionalised versions of events from Psycharis’s own life and his actions and choices are presented to readers as the model to be followed. It is almost as if Psycharis wants to turn the reader into an image of himself. In most of the novels the main character is a novelist, and in *Αγνή*, in particular, the ‘fictional writer’ writes a drama about another writer. This type of demonstration, which emphasises the importance of writing through the multiplication of the author, cannot be ignored. It is like openly saying to the reader to pay attention to this novel. However, the risk involved is for the author to be rejected by being perceived as boring and repetitive.

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<sup>2</sup>Bakhtin coined the term ‘monological’ as distinct from his notion of ‘dialogical’, meaning a work in which ideas are either affirmed or refuted with no middle ground (Bakhtin 1999: 80 & Suleiman 1993: 71). However, the term ‘dialogical’ appears to have an all-pervasive character in Bakhtin’s thought (see in particular Bakhtin 1999: 40 & Bakhtin 1986: 75-6). For the role of the reader in literature see also the articles in Suleiman & Crosman 1980.

In most novels, too, there is a concern with conveying the ‘truth’, though not always related to realism as a mode of writing. This is not accidental since, by appearing as the bearer of truths, the narrative strengthens the credibility it needs in order to be accepted by readers. In that respect, the various repetitions of the same idea are part of an effort to equate the author’s views with some objective external reality. According to Suleiman, “by virtue of the pact which, in the realist novel, links the teller of the story to his audience [...] what the narrator recounts is ‘true’[;] there occurs a blurring of boundaries that makes us accept as ‘true’ not only what the narrator tells us about the events [...] of the fictional world, but also what he tells us in the way of judgment and interpretation” (1993: 72). As Psycharis points out in his introduction to *Ta Δυο Αδέρφια*: “Σκοπός του μυθιστοριογράφου είναι να σου παρουσιάσει την αλήθεια, κ’ έτσι να σε κάμει να συλλογιστής. Άμα βαριέσαι τέτοιο ρομάντζο, θα βαρεθείς κάθε αλήθεια και κάθε συλλογή” (1903a: κθ’). Similar views were also expressed at length in the author’s critical essays. The novel *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* is also the result of this belief, in that case taken to its limits: presenting uncomfortable truths as fiction in an effort to teach readers not to be afraid to speak with frankness. Nevertheless there is an abundance of metafictional strategies, which help the author discuss the issues that preoccupy him: how to write literature and by extension how to influence people. Parody, playfulness and humour are stylistic techniques aimed at entertaining the reader, surprising him, gaining his attention, and engaging him; they favour the pact of trust between author and readers, as can be attested in particular in *To Ταξίδι μου*.

Finally, a significant didactic mode is located in allegorical writing. In most cases, the ‘story’ of the novels and its characters are intended to suggest another level of meaning. Allegory recreates a specific pre-determined meaning and for this reason,

it is a useful didactic device. It was also a favourite mode of writing for other demoticist writers, like Vlachoyannis, Nirvanas, Karkavitsas, Palamas, Passayannis. By choosing specific and unambiguous symbols, they explored this popular mode because it seemed closer to the folktale tradition and to the ‘simple’ style of narration that they wanted to promote (see Sachinis 1989: 219, 258). Psycharis uses allegorical writing extensively. For example, the story of Yannis Petroyannis in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* is an allegory for the language problem in Greece, which could only be solved if people trusted their natural language for all purposes. However, even before *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, the short story *Ο Μάγος* written in 1892 sets out the author’s cultural views using this didactic mode. It is a significant text in order to understand the author’s mode of writing. It presents his views on the Greek language and culture and exemplifies how the allegorical references promote these views.

The story entitled *Ο Μάγος* in its Greek version, *Micropolis* in French, is a folktale drawing upon many intertextual references and borrowing its satirical tone from Jonathan Swift (see Fox 1995).<sup>3</sup> I include this short story in the corpus of my analysis because it functions as a model for promoting the author’s cultural views. It provides information about his ideas and objectives regarding Greek language and literature, and it employs a device (allegory), which is an integral part of the didactic discourse that characterises the author’s novels. The allegory and the notion of the ‘other’ which dominates the story, together form an ‘exemplary narrative’ intended to present a series of ideological propositions and, on a ‘meta-narrative’ level, to give instructions to readers to construe what is narrated. Furthermore, the French version

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<sup>3</sup>The story was published in the periodical *Estia* in March 1892, and in Paris, in Psycharis’s compilation of articles entitled *Autour de la Grèce* (Psychari 1895a: 233-44). References to the Greek story in this chapter are to its reprinting in the first volume of *Πόδα και Μήλα* (Psycharis 1902b: 231-37).

of the same story aims to make known to the French public the linguistic situation in Greece.

The story comprises three parts, and for the purpose of this analysis, I will also include the letter that Psycharis sent to the editor of *Estia*, Drosinis, ‘complaining’ about the reception the story got from his readers (1902b: 239-40). The first part is the main part of the folktale, which presents the allegorical figures, the tiny citizens of a very small country (the ‘Micropolites’), their character, and their habits. The second part is an extension of the main allegorical framework. In this part, the shape of the “city” changes, as do its inhabitants, because of the actions of a magician who appears suddenly with his magical crystal, able to (fore)see the future. The third part of the story is the explanation by the author-narrator himself. He addresses the implied reader and the editor with a playful commentary that betrays his didactic intentions: “Τι λες τώρα να σημαίνει αφτό το παραμύθι;” (237).

As explained in Chapter One, the folktale was significant in Psycharis’s literary model, as an example of popular culture narrated in the language of people, which also allowed scope for experimentation.<sup>4</sup> *Ο Μάγος* is an entertaining folk story with specific messages to promote s and with features of orality. It relates the story of a small city with tiny inhabitants, with a height of only a few inches: “Μια φορά κ’ έναν καιρό, είτανε μια μικρή, μικρούτσικη χώρα [...]” (231). These small citizens were the children of giants; it was not clear, however, whether they were originally born as midgets or whether they simply had not developed properly. They were very proud and very busy writing books. However, their books usually referred back to themselves, praising or criticising each other’s work. The city had many critics, historians and tragedians, even though it was apparent that they had no idea of the true

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<sup>4</sup>For an analysis of this story see Melissaratou 1990.

meaning of these occupations. A very interesting feature was the language used. Micropolites tried to speak using the words of their ancestors but in their mouths these words sounded strange and did not make any sense. Thus Micropolites, it seemed, did not want to speak clearly and allowed confusion to be part of their lives: “Συχνά δεν καταλάβαινε ο ένας τον άλλονα. Τι τύχη, αλήθεια, που την είχαν! Κάποτες ο μικροπολίτης δεν καταλάβαινε κι ο ίδιος τι έγραφε. Δεν είναι τύχη κι αυτό;” (234).

The Micropolites lived in that manner, unlike other people in the world and, according to the story, they never produced any children. The narrator intervenes at this point in the story to propose an explanation, before proceeding with the rest of the narration. He suggests that these legendary citizens were citizens of the Greek nation: they were the ‘teachers’ like the ones existing in every nation. Thus the first part ends with a partial break in the allegorical setting. Moreover, up to that point, the narrator mentions that it was a tale ‘talked’ about amongst other people: “Δεν άκουγες όμως για κανένα μικροπολίτη, νάκαμε ποτέ του παιδί” (234, my emphasis). In the second part, however, the narrator introduces the idea of the significance of books. He explains that he had read in books that a magician appeared suddenly in the city. He was an intellectual with extraordinary abilities as he had in his possession a magical crystal. This crystal concentrated the sun-rays and turned them into a spectacular flame which metaphorically destroyed all misconceptions. In the fictional world, this action eventually burned and eliminated the useless Micropolites. When the land was emptied, another race of people emerged from the mountains, the plains, and the surrounding villages. The magician saw their potential in his crystal: even though the newcomers were small, they could easily learn what was required of them and become bigger. They gradually changed into fully grown citizens (Megalopolites), and were able to express everything they experienced in a proper manner through



their natural language: “Πρώτη φορά θωρούσαν τον κόσμο κ’ ήθελαν όλα να τα πούνε, να τα πουν όλα με μιας. Οι μεγαλοπολίτες όμως λαλούσαν τη γλώσσα που λαλούνε στους κάμπους και στα βουνά. Έτσι, λέω, να το πιάσουμε και μεις γιατί κ’ η ψυχή της Ρωμιοσύνης πώς θα κάμη, πώς θα φανή, αν της σηκώσουμε τη φυσική λαλιά της;” (236).

The third part of the narrative provides an explanation from the author-narrator himself. He points out the importance of the magician as a mediator between people and their true potential for cultural development, and identifies the elements necessary to achieving this development. All these ideas are part of the author’s cultural ideology and can be summarised in the following extract from the story:

Πώς έγινε η Ελλάδα μεγάλη στα χρόνια τα παλιά; Τάχα μήπως με τι δύναμη νίκησε στους μηδικούς πολέμους; Νίκησε τάχα με τα όπλα ή με τα έργα που είχε βγάλει και που έβγαζε ο νους της; Εγώ νομίζω πως ο Λεωνίδας, όταν πάλαιβε στις Θερμοπύλες, πάλαιβε για την Ιλιάδα, πάλαιβε για να διαφεντέψη τους αρχαίους μας τους ραψωδούς· εγώ νομίζω πως οι δικοί μας, όταν πάλαιβε το Μεσολόγγι, πάλαιβαν και κείνοι για τα τραγούδια του λαού μας, που τα τραγουδούσαν τότες στα βουνά. Για να βγή ανεξάρτητο ένα έθνος, για να καταλάβη πως υπάρχει, πρέπει να το φέρη πρώτα η ποίηση που θρέφει στα σωθικά του, ύστερα το σπαθί (237).

We see, therefore, that the story is very brief and simple, lacking any plot or causal relations, except for one incident, the catalytic action of the magician who emerges through unspecified textual references. It follows the structure of a folktale, whose elements are not necessarily related one to another, with the story-teller making many pauses or digressions during his narration and sometimes giving an abrupt account of things. The characters too are placed in a far-away environment, inhabiting a state unlike that of ordinary humans; their physique is microscopic, almost invisible to the

naked eye and belongs to the world of folktales.<sup>5</sup> Another important point is the strange language of Micropolites, which attempts to imitate the language used by their ancestors but ends up being incomprehensible with comic sound patterns (“ακούουσαι και ακηκυίαι”). Their tendency to complicate things when communicating results in divesting them of any real value. In the same way that the language of the Micropolites was completely dysfunctional for everyday communication, their writing also circled around the issues they analysed but never succeeded in portraying them properly.<sup>6</sup>

Psycharis bases the allegory on the contrast between the sizes of contemporaries and ancients, and moves playfully between the written and the oral word, as his narration is a re-creation of another story, which the narrator had allegedly partly heard from others and partly read in a book. The contrast between orality and textuality appears at several points in the story, representing the differences between the two main symbolic categories. For example, the ‘Micropolites’ are always preoccupied with writing books, whereas the villagers Megalopolites are identified by their speech: “λαλούσαν τη γλώσσα που λαλούνε στους κάμπους και στα βουνά” (236). Psycharis stresses his own reliance on the written word, though, when he introduces the magician: “Διάβασα όμως στα βιβλία πως μια φορά ήρθε στον τόπο τους ένας μάγος. Είταν πολύ καλός άνθρωπος και του άρεζε να σπουδάζη και να μαθαίνει” (235). In this case, the characteristic of textuality is a positive attribute in someone with knowledge, and a correct evaluation of the world.

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<sup>5</sup>The similarities with the Lilliputians from *Gulliver's Travels* are striking. See *Jonathan Swift: Gulliver's Travels*, in the edition of Fox 1995.

<sup>6</sup>These references indirectly project the author's views about the importance of language in literature, as expressed also in one of his letters to his friend Eftaliotis: “Η ύλη, το παραμύθι τίποτα δεν είναι· το σπουδαίο είναι η γλώσσα” (Karatzas 1988: 97). The term ‘παραμύθι’ in this reference implies the plot of a story, not the genre. It is indicative that Psycharis will hold onto these views in all his writings.

The allegory in the story is based on a correlation between size and mental ability. So, where the narrator describes small physical stature, he is implying 'small minds'. 'Small minds' is a metaphor suggesting reduced intellectual ability, lack of perception and understanding. Furthermore, this opposition is extended to different civilizations produced in different times: the ancient Greeks are the ethical giants, the ones who produced the tragedies, the comedies, the rhetoric known to and imitated by all other nations. The contemporary Greeks (Micropolites) are the ones who have not produced anything of lasting significance but attempt to imitate their ancestors with no success at all. It is suggested that, since the Micropolites are so preoccupied with writing plays, poems, and essays, a possible solution to their problem would be to use their own language, which exists in latent form, in order to produce something authentically their own, and start developing into Megalopolites: not giants, but larger and thus more significant than they were at that time. Thus, the allegory is structured around the following scheme: the giants are the Ancient Greeks; the Micropolites are the author's Greek contemporaries; the people of the village and the mountains represent themselves. They have an existence somewhere between the other two, and though they might be small, they have the potential to become full-grown. The magician is connected to the latter as the intellectual with the vision and mission to reform Greek culture – like the author himself – and his crystal symbolises the correct language. It is important to mention that the first group (the giants/ancient Greeks) exists only conceptually in the world of the story, therefore its status and position is irreversible and it forms the benchmark by which the other characters are judged.

Allegory, as its etymology indicates (speaking of other things), involves "a coherent set of circumstances, which signify a second order of correlated meanings" (Abrams 1999: 6). It always implies a high degree of intertextuality, being the textual

space where several discourses meet and co-exist (Suleiman 1993: 43). Allegory can be viewed as “representative of the ‘figural’ of all language, of the distance between the signifier and signified”, which represents the distance between what is said and what is meant, “and the response to allegory becomes representative of critical activity per se” (Fineman 1981: 27). Allegorical writing is always a writing ‘in disguise’, and it goes back to its subject matter which is language and communication, in order to discover what lies behind the disguise. This concept is thematised in the short story under examination in multiple ways.

It is suggested through the verbal non-communication between citizens of Micropolis, who even though they enjoy listening to each other, do not understand the meaning of the words used, which float like empty signifiers. Furthermore, in a direct analogy with the hidden meaning of allegory, the ideal nation suggested by the narrator is hidden in plains and mountains, and will emerge when language re-discovers its directness and is no longer fabricated. That is, when the authentic language of the ordinary people prevails, and the allegory ceases to be active. Because the Micropolitans did not want to speak clearly, “νέττα σκέττα”, the allegory functions at their expense, yet the narrator uses the same device, an elaborate manner of telling a story with hidden intentions and descriptions, in order to subvert it. He uses the allegorical structure in order to promote his message more successfully. And the message itself claims the opposite of the desire to complicate things, promoting the idea of a plain, simple language.

Allegory always functions in relation to a set of other structures or texts from which it derives its ‘meaning’; it is a process of progressive dialogue between texts, re-interpretation and even of conflict. Even though these structures may seem to a large extent arbitrary, in that there is no specific way to connect a commentary or

ideological discourse to a specific set of images, there is a certain consensus as to what they signify to a specific group of people, in a specific historical, social, and literary context.<sup>7</sup> In order for the allegory to be able to achieve its didactic aim, the imagery that it suggests, and the metaphor process, must be understood by the recipients. If not, then it cancels itself out, and the second level of meaning is not activated. In that sense, there is a presupposition that the recipient, the reader of or the listener to the story, will have a considerable amount of shared knowledge in common with the teller of the story. Thus, allegory always assumes a particular audience or readership. Nevertheless, one of the problems of allegory is that it does not fix a single meaning to its imagery. It always runs the risk of being entrapped in its own modality, inviting a number of different readings. The allegorical interpretation intersects the world of the fiction and the real world of the reader. In order to avoid this risk, the narrator of the story purposely proposes one interpretation when he points out that: “Οι μικροπολίτες είναι δικοί μας, ας είναι και δάσκαλοι. Μήπως δεν έχει κάθε έθνος τους δικούς του; Εγώ τους γνώρισα τους μικροπολίτες και τους αγαπώ” (235). With this phrase, it becomes obvious that he refers not to the figures of the allegory, but to what they stand for in the real world. The progression is made clear by a contradictory statement further on when the narrator resumes the allegory declaring that nobody in the world has ever seen the Micropolites: “Κανείς στον κόσμο δεν είδε ποτέ τους μικροπολίτες, κ’ έτσι δεν μπόρεσε να πη κανείς πόσο έζησαν τα μικρουλάκια” (235). This inaccuracy is deliberate and is used as a bridge to the second part of the story, the second allegorical image, involving the introduction of the magician, behind whose mask the author himself hides.

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<sup>7</sup>This explains why allegory tends to be associated with satire, as satire requires a consensus as to the implied meaning.

When the narrator addresses the implied reader with: “Τι λες τώρα να σημαίνει αφτό το παραμύθι;” he introduces an explicit commentary on the role of the magician and the importance of his actions, and reveals that the story has a two-fold didacticism. It includes one message which is addressed to the Greek readership, suggesting they should use the language of the villagers if they want to progress and to create a modern nation, and another, which is addressed to the ‘demoticist’ group of writers, suggesting what they have to do in order to promote this progress, namely, to write simple stories like this one, projecting the national ideals. Thus, the story functions as an ‘exemplary narrative’ not only in the sense of providing a moral about language and literature, but also, in that it constitutes a ‘model’ of what Greek literature should include in its canon. As the author explained in a letter to Eftaliotis: “Γράφεις για το Ρωμιό, πρέπει να συλλογιέσαι ρωμαίικα. Ο Γαβρηλίδης όμως όλους διόλου άδικο δεν έχει. Θέλουμε παραμύθια σαν τον Γκουλλιβέρη. Τέτοια χρειάζεται ο λαός [...]” (Karatzas 1988: 9).

In order to eliminate the possibility of misreading the meaning, the didacticism at the heart of allegory is structured at three different levels: at the narrative level (the story), the interpretive level (the commentary), and the pragmatic level (the imperatives addressed to readers). (On the three levels which correspond to three discourses see Suleiman 1993: 35). At the narrative level, there is a dualistic system of values, which pervades the story. The notion of the ‘other’, related to the (alle)gory, involves the hidden discourse but also the figures of the different symbolic structures. Therefore, the villagers in the story function as the ‘correct other’, correct in relation to the humanoid Micropolites by virtue of their simple language. The moral for readers is that they should use this form of language, as opposed to that used by the Micropolites, in order to grow, literally, in the world of the tale, but



metaphorically, in a contemporary Greek context, and maybe one day achieve the glory of their ‘giant’ ancestors. There are multiple ‘others’ in relation to the Micropolites, whose presence serves to emphasise their wrong conduct and their inadequacies. For example, the way in which the Micropolites attempt to appropriate a foreign culture, not appreciating this culture as a whole, but evaluating it only partially and misjudging it: “Αμα έρχουνταν κανένας ξένος στη Μικρόπολη, όσο μπόι κι αν είχε, γίνονταν αμέσως άφαντος” (234).<sup>8</sup> Then there is the presence of the magician, who enjoys studying and learning (235) by contrast to the Micropolites who only teach, judge, and make declarations. The story addresses contemporary Greeks and, in particular, Greek demoticist writers and expects them to collaborate in establishing the interpretation of the allegory, since a different recipient would imply a different commentary. At the level of the narrative again, the satirical tone is used to influence the attitude of readers toward certain types of people (δάσκαλοι), the use of *katharevousa* and the literary prose written in it, as well as modes of conduct like attacking each other.

At the interpretive level, there is the main ideological opposition, which clarifies the meaning of the allegory, the difference between pedantic attitudes and spontaneous literary production. Pedantry is what characterises the ‘teachers’ who know nothing of the nation’s true needs and values, whereas the magician(s), like Psycharis and the other demoticists, are their opponents because they (re)produce popular literature.<sup>9</sup> In the story the ‘teachers’ write constantly but there is no authenticity in their writing. By contrast, the allegorical image of the magician promotes the authentic ‘words’, the ‘textual’ guarantee which the ‘micropolites’ lack.

<sup>8</sup>The description of their climbing on top of the foreigner is another allegory-within-an-allegory.

<sup>9</sup>This is expressed by the author in another letter: “[...] ξέρω πως μήτε εσένα μήτε εμένα δε θα το καταλάβη κανείς ακόμα στην Ελλάδα τι αξίζουμε. Να το πάρης απόφαση αφτό – και να δουλέβης. Εμείς θα τους κάμουμε μεγαλοπολίτες και τότες θα μας θυμούνται” (Karatzas 1988: 39).

The figure of the magician introduces prescriptive actions, a very important part of the exemplary narrative. In that sense, the magician holds the key to the interpretation. He is not only a bearer of civilisation, with his striving for learning and progress, but also the one who achieves the correct interpretation of national history; he is placed even higher than the heroes who defended the Greek territories throughout the nation's history. Thus the story itself offers its own basic interpretation. Furthermore, it is significant that in the world of the story, the magician is the only one with a stable identity, while the other figures are all portrayed with fluid identities, a constant reminder of the motif of alteration and metamorphosis, which is encountered in folktales.

Another important element of the story is the possession of the crystal. This refers symbolically to the language of ordinary people, since it destroys the Micropolites who cannot tolerate its 'heat', but it signifies more than possession of the correct language. It implies the timely intervention of the intellectual in choosing the correct forms and standardising them, in accordance with the author's view about the mission of the novelist-grammarian, as explained in Chapter One. It is also a very successful symbol of scientific advances, as a synecdochical representation of the microscope, whose function corresponds perfectly to this story of sizes. However, its main purpose is to represent pure, clear, and unmediated language. And pure in this context means the exact opposite of the linguistic purism that attempted to bring the language back to its archaic forms.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the exhortations which appear at the end of parts two and three of the story belong to the pragmatic level. The first of these exhortations is addressed to the

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<sup>10</sup>It is tempting to make an analogy with Sartre's view on transparent language concerning the distinction between poetry and prose: "there is prose [...] when the word passes through our gaze like glass traversed by sunlight" (1948: 71). It is not difficult to see why narratives which wish to promote a specific world-view, like the ones attempted by Psycharis and in a different context by Sartre, are open to such metaphorical associations about clarity and purity of communication.

Greek readers (see extract on page 236 of the story quoted previously); while the other is addressed to his fellow demoticist writers, on whose behalf Psycharis had assumed the role of leader and ‘father’:

Για να βγη ανεξάρτητο ένα έθνος, για να καταλάβη πως υπάρχει, πρέπει να το φέρη πρώτα η ποίηση που θρέφει στα σωθικά του, ύστερα το σπαθί. Ο μόνος ο νικητής είναι ο μάγος, γιατί ο μάγος άμα φανή, βλέπει μέσα στου λαού την καρδιά. Δε βλέπει τους άλλους, τους κουρδισμένους, τους τσιτωμένους, τα ψέφτικα ταθρωπάκια [...] (237).

The pragmatic level of discourse with its explicit injunctions is, ultimately, what creates the ‘thesis’ of the exemplary narrative. There is a set of values connected with the magician, which must be embraced by readers. The narrative attempts to enclose its reading. As often happens, though, despite the foregrounding of the interpretation, the explicit commentary and of the instructions, the meaning stays open, hence the author’s bitterness in his letters.<sup>11</sup>

Nevertheless, Psycharis used the allegorical technique to a greater or lesser extent in most of his novels to promote his view that Greek culture would develop when natural language prevailed. For example, Yanniris the overachiever in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* can be seen as another facet of the figure of the magician, as is Myriella, the ‘educator’ in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904), while Yannis in the same novel stands synecdochically for Modern Greek peasants and villagers. Furthermore, most of the female characters in Psycharis’s novels stand as symbols of the idea of the ‘Muse’, who brings inspiration to the poet, in particular in the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*.<sup>12</sup> Very simplistic allegorical figures are also used by the author in his plays: *Για το Ρωμαίικο Θέατρο: Ο Γουανάκος* (comedy), *Ο Κυρούλης* (drama) (1901). The

<sup>11</sup> As becomes clear from the author’s ‘complaints’ at the end of the narrative – intended in reality to reinforce his message – and from his letters, the readership in Greece was not able to fully understand and share his vision about the development of Greek culture.

<sup>12</sup> See also Psycharis 1929a: 297 on the role of the Muse.

theme of metamorphosis appears again in the comedy when an innocent girl, Myroula, transforms a beast, who cannot speak, into an advanced being through her love: “Αχ! εσύ είσαι ο Ποιητής μου και με πρόσμενες εσύ [...]” (Psycharis 1901: 329).<sup>13</sup>

Thus allegorical writing helps promote the didacticism of the narratives by strengthening the author’s position as an intellectual, who holds the key to interpretation(s) and who can also open new paths for his readers to learn from him. It also enhances the appeal of the story’s moral through an aesthetic satisfaction achieved by its imaginative traits. Finally, it reassures readers that they are part of a community, sharing common knowledge and values with other members and are able to respond accordingly to cases of discourse with latent connotations.

The same allegorical concepts as in Psycharis’s story are encountered also in Karkavitsas’s novel *Ο Αρχαιολόγος* (1904), which aims to promote a union between the oral and the textual, the popular and the scholarly, the ‘tongue’ and the ‘pen’ (see Politi 1988). It may be interesting to discuss Karkavitsas’s narrative briefly, and its use of the allegorical structure, to see how Psycharis’s views may have influenced other writers of the period.

Karkavitsas’s narrative also focuses on the issue of language and Greek identity. The narrative is highly allegorical – it even includes the discovery of a statue at some stage in the plot which represents some entity declared to represent an abstract notion of ‘Glory’. It also reads very much like a folktale, because there are parts in it where the conventions of verisimilitude are suspended and the reader is

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<sup>13</sup>For an analysis of the plays and the prologue written by Psycharis as a manifesto for the “Theatre of Ideas”, see Puchner 1995: 15-76.

transferred to an a-temporal mythological space.<sup>14</sup> Karkavitsas follows to a large extent Psycharis's model: he presents one of the two main characters, Aristodemos, as seeking his identity in the monuments of his ancestors in the belief that, if he were to speak like the Ancient Greeks, he would be elevated to their status: "Η παράδοση έλεγε πως αν ήταν μεγάλοι εκείνοι ήταν από τη γλώσσα τους. Σκέφτηκε λοιπόν αφού επήρε το όνομα, να πάρη κ' εκείνη" (Karkavitsas 1973: 1261). However, in his attempts to use that language and to discover monuments of the ancient civilization in his land, he loses touch with reality, and by wanting to invert the natural cycle of life, he causes his mother's death. In that sense, Aristodemos, with his extreme behaviour and with his emphasis on ancient texts, is similar to the Micropolites of Psycharis's story.

The other character in Karkavitsas's narrative, Dimitrakis, represents the Greek people and also the demoticist writers. Dimitrakis is not fully developed as a character, and he does not yet know how to proceed in the course of history. He cannot find his place and his role yet, although the text proposes that this is because his brother's obsession with the past does not leave either of them any space to develop (see Politi 1988: 47). His behaviour, though, has the advantage of following the path of popular wisdom. More significantly, Dimitrakis uses his natural language without any shame, and he allies himself with Elpida, who is a personification of popular culture. Dimitrakis stands for the Megalopolites in Psycharis's story, the villagers, who use the demotic language, and who will eventually progress, when a sterile attachment to the past and futile attempts to revive the Ancient Greek language cease to get in the way. In Psycharis's story the Micropolites are eliminated when a powerful agent is able to see them for what they really are, leaving the space and time

<sup>14</sup>The beginning of the narrative is that of a folktale, thus directing the readers' expectations: "Κόκκινη κλώνά κλωσμένη, στην ανέμη τυλιγμένη [...]" (Karkavitsas 1973: 1256). Similarly, Psycharis's story begins like a folktale also: "Μια φορά κ' έναν καιρό, είτανε μια μικρή, μικρούτσικη χώρα" (231).

free for the modern Greeks, who will lead the nation forward. In Karkavitsas's narrative too, the old ways of thinking and acting have to die before any happiness and prosperity can be achieved. In both narratives the identity of the Modern Greeks is not yet developed; it seems that they are at a very early stage of their development, and they will manage to take their proper form – as is suggested in the story *O Mάγος* – only when their language prevails.

The tensions between the two sides – the supporters of *katharevousa*, and supporters of demoticism – regarding the appropriation of the essence of 'Greekness', which pervaded not only literary texts and critical essays, but also real-life incidents, are again allegorically indicated in Elpida's lament: "Μάνα μ', να σε ρωτήσουμε και να μας μολογήσης, τίνος αφίνεις τα κλειδιά από τ' αρχοντικό σου;" (Karkavitsas 1973: 1327). The eponymous archeologist (Aristodemos), dies when his own obsession, having reached a peak, becomes his nemesis, and the statue of 'Glory' falls on top of him and kills him. The story ends with the promise of a new beginning as in all folktales: "Πέθανε – τον έθαψαν τον Αρχαιολόγο. Κ' έμειναν εκείνοι καλά κ' εμείς εδώ καλύτερα." (ibid: 1355). Just as the Micropolitans have no soul, and instead the Greek soul is to be found in the people's natural language, similarly, in Karkavitsas's story, it is the younger brother who embodies the eternal Greek soul: "Α, ο αδερφός σου! Είπε η κόρη κουνώντας το κεφάλι με συγκατάβαση. Εκείνος πήρε τα βιβλία τους μοναχά. Μα εμείς κληρονομήσαμε την ψυχή τους." (ibid: 1309).

Psycharis, and the other demoticist writers, use the folktale, and the allegorical writing as the popular equivalent of the novel. By transferring the oral to the textual method of narration, and by employing a didactic, educational discourse in order to propose truths of life, they were altering the generic nature of prose from the elaborate literature of the purist medium to 'light literature' or, as Karkavitsas put it in a letter



to Karl Dietrich in 1905: “Σε μας εδώ – το ξέρεις πιστεύω – δεν είναι ακόμα καιρός να τραγουδούμε αφρόντιστα. Πρέπει και να τα (sic) δασκαλεύουμε” (mentioned in Politi 1996: 132-3).

### CHAPTER THREE

#### *TO TAZIDI MOY*: INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE 'PLAY OF WRITING' AS DIDACTIC STRATEGIES <sup>1</sup>

*To Tazidi moy* (1888) is considered a symbolic landmark in the history of Modern Greek literature. The text is an entertaining fictional account of the narrator's itinerary through Constantinople and Greece. For the first time in Greek prose, it is a text written in a language as close as possible to that spoken by ordinary people. The publication of the book is, without doubt, the significant event which moved the 'Language Question' in Greece onto a new level, intensifying the debates between the supporters of *katharevousa* and the demotic (Beaton 1994: 311). Although much has been written about the language and the significance of the text, as with the rest of Psycharis's prose, there has been so little discussion of its narrative features that the text is still little understood, despite its fame.<sup>2</sup> This could be the result of its ambivalent generic status. It is written like a travelogue but it also reads like a folktale or a scholarly essay and it would be difficult to define it as a novel. Palamas has defined its style as fragmentary but with an internal unity (1938: 13, but written in 1906). Similar observations have also been made by Kriaras (1981: 107) and Stergiopoulos (1986: 142).

In this chapter, I will analyse *To Tazidi moy*, putting the emphasis on its playful mode of writing, which is not only an expression of the author's humour but also a very interesting narrative technique. I will discuss how this playful mode,

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'intertextuality' popularised by Julia Kristeva is used in its broader sense: "[it signifies] the multiple ways in which any one literary text is made up of other texts, by means of its open or covert citations and *allusions*, its repetitions and transformations of the formal and substantive features of earlier texts, or simply its unavoidable participation in the common stock of linguistic and literary conventions and procedures that are 'always ready' in place and constitute the discourses into which we are born" (Abrams 1999: 317, the emphasis as it is in the text).

<sup>2</sup>Except in Beaton 1988 and Meraklis 1988. Robinson 1988 discusses Psycharis's novels but does not mention *To Tazidi moy*.

created mainly through various intertextual allusions, helps to fulfil the didactic aims of the text. The inclusion of other voices and other texts – albeit orchestrated by authorial guidance – does not prevent the main points of the work from coming through to readers but helps to make the didactic tone less severe and, therefore, more convincing. In other words, there is ‘entertainment and knowledge’ in accordance with the author’s stated aim of entertaining readers and making them understand his points: “[...] να διασκεδάση ο αναγνώστης μου, κι αν είναι δυνατό να μη με βαρεθή, ακόμη κι όταν του μιλώ για σοβαρά κ’ επιστημονικά ζητήματα. Μα πρώτα απ’ όλα θέλησα να μπορέση ο καθένας να με καταλάβη” (Psycharis 1993: 39).<sup>3</sup>

In the first section of this chapter, I will discuss what led Psycharis to conceive the idea of this narrative, its significance for Greek literature, its form and content and its different editions. In the second section, I will examine how the religious and folktale references support the didacticism of the text. In the third section, I will analyse how the illusion of polyphony operates in reinforcing the author’s views on Greek language and culture. This is done as the authorial voice disclaims the validity of other voices in a humoristic tone that makes the didacticism less austere. Together, the various small stories included in the narrative, the folktale references, and the illusion of polyphony (which is supposed to represent other voices) all contribute to the playful mode in which the text is written.

### 1. The significance of the text for Greek literature

The publication of *To ταξίδι μου* in 1888 prompted Alexandros Pallis and Argyris Eftaliotis to make contact with Psycharis and his movement (Kriaras 1981: 320). This resulted in close relationships developing between them, especially

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<sup>3</sup>In this chapter, my references are from Alkis Angelou’s edition in Estia. Angelou has faithfully reproduced the text of the first edition of 1888.

between Psycharis and Eftaliotis, which is recorded in their correspondence. The 716 letters exchanged between the two friends and collaborators provide valuable information about the novels on which they were working.<sup>4</sup> However, since the letters exchanged postdate the publication of *To Taξίδι μου*, there is a lack of first-hand information regarding the origins of the idea for this narrative – which makes it all the more challenging to try to understand what led to its creation.

Psycharis was thinking about a narrative relating to the Greek culture some time before the actual journey to Greece: in the first volume of his *Essais*, he talked about an abstract ideal, a book, which would appear and bring a breath of fresh air to Greek literature: “[...] ne faut-il point désespérer de l’avenir. Ce livre, que tout le monde attend, s’écrira sans doute quelque jour, il s’écrit peut-être à l’heure (sic) qu’il est” (Psichari 1886: 287).<sup>5</sup> Even if Psycharis had already sketched out the basic form of the narrative that *To Taξίδι μου* should take, he must have been inspired by the actual journey, which shaped his ideas regarding the culture and the way of life in the areas he visited. The journey that preceded the writing of this narrative was scheduled to coincide with the author’s participation in a Conference in Constantinople, organised by the Cultural Association of the city, “Ἑλληνικός φιλολογικός Σύλλογος Κωνσταντινουπόλεως”, on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary (see Christidis 1979). Psycharis was the representative of The French Ministry of Education and his paper, which was written in the demotic, analysed the ‘Language Question’ in Greece. He also intended to conduct research on the linguistic varieties used in Constantinople, in Chios, and parts of mainland Greece. His aim was to find authentic data to support what he had already said two years earlier in his *Essais* regarding the formation of the Modern Greek language. Four months before the journey, on March

<sup>4</sup>The letters have been edited and published by Karatzas and a team at the University of Ioannina. See also Karatzas 1985.

<sup>5</sup>See also Kriaras 1981: 318.

18, 1886, Psycharis was writing to a family friend, Constantinos Sathas, to inform him about his mission:

Vous avez dû apprendre, avant que j'aie le plaisir de vous l'annoncer, que je suis chargé d'une mission du gouvernement pour me rendre au Congrès de Constantinople et pour me livrer à certaines études dialectales à Chio. Nous partons en Juillet. D'ici là j'aurai fort à faire pour préparer le texte de la communication que je dois lire au Syllogue en grec [...] [p]uis je me rendrai à Chio et reviendrai par Athènes, Zante et peut-être Venise! Ce sera une vraie joie (Vertsoni-Kokoli 1980: 102).<sup>6</sup>

The journey lasted for four months, July to October 1886 (Kriaras 1981: 116). As is mentioned also in the narrative: “Γιούλιο μήνα, στις τριάντα σωστά, μέρα Παρασκεβή, η ώρα ξήμισυ το βράδυ [...] σηκωθήκαμε να πάμε στο σταθμό, για να πάρουμε το σιδηρόδρομο” (Psycharis 1993: 49). The book was published in Greece about two years after the journey; there were to be two more editions in Psycharis’s lifetime, one in 1905 and one in 1926.

*To Taξίδι μου* was a manifesto for the demotic language and an attempt to analyse Greek history, culture, and landscape through the critical eye of an intellectual, who felt both part of the tradition he was trying to analyse and an outsider. It is a significant literary attempt at the mapping of prose fiction in Greece, which could count only a few landmarks before then (Stergiopoulos 1997: 12). Before Psycharis’s text, the other milestone in Greek prose, in the 1880s, was the development of the genre of the short story, which described the way of life and the mores of Greek villagers, initiated and supported by the competition in the *Estia*

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<sup>6</sup>It is interesting to note that in this correspondence, Psycharis uses the French language. The first text written in the demotic, his paper for the conference in Constantinople, was written or perhaps edited while he was in Greece, as is mentioned in this letter. In previous years, 1881-1884, in his letters to Sathas, Psycharis used *katharevousa* (op.cit.: 83-9).

magazine.<sup>7</sup> In the decade that followed the publication of Psycharis's text, the 'ethographic' mode was extended to novels, with a gradual transition from the 'ethography' of the village to that of the city, as depicted in the novels of Papadiamandis, Karkavitsas and Xenopoulos for example. As far as the literary language was concerned, the demotic had gained ground in poetry, which was still the dominant literary form of expression, with the works of Solomos, Valaoritis, Palamas, and Drosinis, but only a couple of novels such as *Η Στρατιωτική Ζωή εν Ελλάδι* in 1870-1, and *Λουκής Λάρας* in 1879 were written in the language that approximated to that used by people in everyday life. Even in these two novels the language used was not actually the same as what came to be generally called 'demotic'. In Athens, the cultural centre of the free Greek nation, very little prose was written in the demotic before or even after the publication of *Το Ταξίδι μου*. The first novel written entirely in the demotic was Karkavitsas's *Ο Ζητιάνος*, in 1896, influenced undoubtedly by Psycharis's text (see Mastrodimitris 1985: 27, 48). Vlachoyannis also wrote his novels in the demotic after the publication of *Το Ταξίδι μου*. Thus, Psycharis's text was on the margins of the literary canon of the period because it could not be described as belonging to any of the main genres (poetry, short story or novel) and because it was written in colloquial language.

The language of *Το Ταξίδι μου* was not the only element that set it apart; the form also was very different from anything written around that time. *Το Ταξίδι μου* was not a travelogue, though the author used the conventions of the genre with a distinct irony, to parody that quintessentially nineteenth-century form of writing and amuse his readers. For example, in the chapter entitled 'Ταξίδι', the narrator gives an amusing and detailed account of his journey: "κάμαμε ταξίδι μοναδικό· δεν έσπασε

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<sup>7</sup>The announcement appeared in 1883 in *Estia*, for a "competition whose 'subject will be Greek, that is, will consist either of the description of scenes from the life of the people in any of its historical periods, or of the narration of an episode of Greek history'" (Beaton 1994: 70).



ρόδα, δε χάλασε αμάξι, άλλο τραίνο δεν απαντήσαμε να μας πλακώσει – και δε μας σκότωσε κανείς. Το Σάββατο πρωί, στις δέκα και δωδεκάμισυ, φτάσαμε στη Μαρσίλια. Κάμαμε στου θείου μου πρόγεμα λαμπρό· είχαμε πολύ καλή όρεξη κι όχι λίγη δίψα. Κάτσαμε, φάγαμε, γελάσαμε κ' έτσι ήρθε πια κι ώρα να μπαρκαριστούμε” (1993: 49). On the other hand, the author denies that he is attempting this genre from the very beginning, suggesting to readers that they should not treat his book as a travelogue. As he explains in the preface to the first edition (Δυο λόγια): “Πολλοί ταξιδιώτες συνηθίζουν και μας λεν τι έκαμαν τη Δεφτέρα και την Τρίτη, τι ώρα έφυγαν, τι κρασί ήπιαν, πόσα κουνούπια τους δάγκασαν [...] Έπειτα, σ' ό,τι χώρα κι αν πατήσουν, κάθονται και μας διγούνται τα ιστορικά της. Τέτοια δεν έχω” (1993: 38). Discrepancies such as this are indications of the playful mode in which the author relates his points.

Nor is the text a scholarly essay either, precisely for the above reason, the irony and the playful tone with which the author explains specific linguistic issues, even though certain chapters tend towards a more scholarly approach, such as the chapter ‘Συμβιβασμός’ for example. By contrast, poetry and imagination were claimed by the author to be the two main features of the text: “γραμματική όμως δε θέλησα να κάμω. Το βιβλίο μου άλλο δεν είναι παρά φαντασία και ποίηση” (38). It is interesting that Palamas also distinguished these two qualities in order to praise Psycharis’s work: “αντίθετα της γνώμης των πολλών, όλων ίσως, κι’ αυτών που τιμούν και αγαπούν το συγγραφέα του ‘Ταξιδιού’, πιστεύω πως το σημαντικότερο χάρισμα του Ψυχάρη... δεν είναι η επιστήμη, είναι η ποίηση... Ποιητής όχι με το στίχο του Πήγασο (sic), μα με το Λόγο του Πρωτέα” (Palamas 1960c: 311 written in 1906, the same review in Palamas 1938). Palamas’s evaluation captures Psycharis’s distinctive mode of writing, which could take many different forms, and gives an

indication as to why nothing similar had either preceded or followed it in Greek prose (see also Beaton 1988: 47).

Yet, in the author's correspondence, there is mention of a plan for another similar text, wider in scope, which would present the true essence of 'Greekness'. The narrative Psycharis had in mind would again describe a long journey that would include his visits to the Ionian Islands, Crete and Cyprus. As he explained in a letter written in 1901:

[κ]αι θα το πω αφτό μου το ποίημα *Το μεγάλο το Ταξίδι*. Θα γίνη, όπως λογαριάζω, τον Απρίλη 1903 και θα βαστάξη τέσσερεις μήνες ίσια με τον Άβγουστο. Ως εκεί, ελπίζω να σου προφτάξω και τη γραμματική σου. Μα θα τη δημοσιέψω στο γυρισμό μου, γιατί και κει θα συνάξω πολλά. Πρέπει νάχουμε το νου μας να μη γράψουμε άξαφνα τίποτις που κατόπι, σαν ακούσω κάμποσα ελληνικά, δε βρεθή και σωστό. Και τον καιρό που θα τυπώνεται, θα τοιμάζω το *Μεγάλο το Ταξίδι* που σου λέω (Karatzas 1988: 374).

The journey would involve linguistic research aimed at preparing a grammar of spoken Modern Greek. There were many points in common between this journey and the previous one: the purpose of the journey (linguistic research), the use of a similar title, the similar objectives and duration of four months, all suggest that the work Psycharis had in mind was meant to duplicate his first efforts in *Το Ταξίδι μου*. It seems, therefore, that this unique type of narration appealed to Psycharis as it gave him the freedom to explore different aspects of his creative thinking, which corresponded to both sides of his personality, to the scholar and to the creative writer.<sup>8</sup>

The freedom from the constraints of a narrative plot, and at the same time, a specific

<sup>8</sup>The title of the narrative (*Το Ταξίδι μου*) is open to different metaphorical interpretations. In Psycharis's thinking, there is an affinity between the sea and the journey, and the process of creative writing, as pointed out in his correspondence (op.cit.) and in the following extract from the text: "[η] θάλασσα έχει κάτι που σε μαγέβει. Όταν κοιτάζει κανείς την πλώρη που με τόλμη σκίζει τα νερά για να περάση, νομίζει τότες που μπορεί άξαφνα κι ο ίδιος να κόψη δρόμο μεγάλο. Η φαντασία πετιέται και τρέχει με το βαπόρι: ο νους φουσκώνει τα πανιά του" (1993: 93-4).

project, which would focus on his ideas, was the ideal framework in which to present his aspirations for Greek prose. The idea for the second narrative was never realised but the author must have used the impressions gained from such a journey as the material for the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, which was drafted in 1903 (Psycharis 1910-1: 460).<sup>9</sup> However, the author mentions another ‘literary journey’ to be made in April 1904, which suggests that the connection between travelling and writing was a recurring theme in his work (Karatzas 1988: 504). Nevertheless, Psycharis did not accomplish these plans. Instead he reworked the first edition of *Το Ταξίδι μου* and not only prepared a different ‘preface’ but also a lengthy ‘prologue’, which he named ‘Απολογία’ by analogy with the Socratic *Apologia*, the philosopher’s confession of his views and attitude to life.<sup>10</sup>

### 1.1. The different editions

The Ermis edition, to which I refer, reproduced the first edition, remarking that it was a historical document: “σαν είδος ντοκουμέντο που είναι”, using Psycharis’s own words about it (Psycharis 1993: 10). It is true that this text when it appeared for the first time was very innovative. As Psycharis explained in a letter sent to Eftaliotis in January 1905, its publication was a ground-breaking attempt, irrespective of its faults: “Αφού το συλλογίστηκα κι αφού το είπαμε κιόλας μαζί, το καλήτερο μου φάνηκε να διορθώσω το πρωτότυπο, την πρώτη έκδοση, όσο γίνεται λιγότερο. Δεν ντρέπουμε διόλου για κάτι στραβούτσικα ή αδέξια που έχει μέσα. Πρώτη δοκιμή στα πεζά – τέλεια δε μπορούσε νάναι [...]” (Karatzas 1988: 550). The idea of reworking

<sup>9</sup>In that novel Psycharis praised in particular the language and culture of the Ionian Islands (see Chapter Seven).

<sup>10</sup>The preface in this case is the traditional short explanatory note which precedes the narrative. The author also wrote a prologue (‘Απολογία’), which was another explanation, this time lengthy; this was also intended to precede the main text. However, because the prologue was very long it was published separately and although it refers to the main text it can also be read as an independent document.

his narrative and publishing a second edition must have been based less on the need to re-evaluate or alter certain views, and more on the author's insistence on strengthening the position of demoticism in the linguistic debates in Greece by producing a stream of literary work.

The second edition was published in 1905 without its prologue, the 'Apologia', which was extremely long. The 'Apologia' was published in the periodical *Noumas* (6 November 1905 to 25 January 1906) with the following note: "[η] Απολογία είναι ο καθαυτό γλωσσολογικός πρόλογος της δέφετερης έκδοσης του *Ταξιδιού* μου που βγαίνει φέτο [...] Βέβαιο είναι πως όποιος βγή στον κόσμο ναποδείξη μιαν αλήθεια, ό,τι αλήθεια κι αν είναι, πάντα θα κατηγορηθή. Έχει λοιπόν το χρέος να πη το λόγο του κι αφτός. Προσπάθησα να τον πω – κι ας με κρίνουνε τα παιδιά μας" (in Psycharis's *Ρόδα και Μήλα*, 1906b: 31-2n). The 'Apologia' was also published in the third volume of *Ρόδα και Μήλα* (1906), which was introduced by the quotation from Plato "υμείς δ' εμού ακούσεσθε πάσαν την αλήθειαν" (ibid: 31). It presented Psycharis's linguistic views divided into different sections like small chapters, a hundred and one in number. Most sections aimed at answering the accusations that had been made over the years between the two editions, regarding these views. Certain sections present very specific suggestions in relation to correct and incorrect linguistic usage as noted in people's speech and writing by the author. Other sections present stories from the author's own life, and events within the various social circles in Athens. The 'Apologia' to the second edition does not differ greatly from the main text itself, except in its length, and in its more scholarly tone. The similarities between the 'Apologia' and main text of *To Ταξίδι μου*, which both present the same ideas about language, and the use of Plato's quotation, reinforce the

impression that the second edition of *To Tačίδι μου* was intended to present Psycharis's linguistic views once more to Greek society.

The preface to the second edition of the book, on the other hand, was a much shorter note, also published in *Noumas* (11 June 1906). It was similar to the beginning of the first chapter of *To Tačίδι μου*; in both texts there is an association between specific aspects of the landscape and an idea of what Greece is about, which sets the framework for the introduction to the 'journey'. The author suggested in the preface that a suppressed desire enticed him to visit his homeland and there is a description of the landscape, and in particular of the sea, in order to introduce the image of Greece as well as the idea of travelling synecdochically.<sup>11</sup> He took an 'aesthetic approach' to the landscape, discussing how the geography, the climate and specific areas affect people and their attitudes to life (Leontis 1995: 118, 125). In the preface, in particular, the two main symbols emerging as specifically 'Greek symbols' were the sun and the sea.

The preface summarised the points presented in the main text. The most significant argument was that Greek efforts to keep the ancient culture alive were focused on the preservation of a language that had long ceased to be spoken. The author suggested allegorically that the various linguistic forms were different varieties of fish found in the sea, while the Greek people were like fishermen, who caught in their linguistic choices the wrong varieties of fish:

Δεν παρατηρούσαμε όμως πως οι λέξεις αφτές, οι ξεψαρεμένες, μοιάζανε αλήθεια με κάτι ψάρια ωγύγια, θεόχοντρα και σεβάσμια, που συνηθίσανε χρόνια και χρόνια ναρκοκινιούνται κάτω στις θάλασσας τους άβυσσους, και που όταν τα φέρης στην απανωσιά του νερού σκάνουνε αμέσως, γιατί χρειάζονται να τα πατή το βάρος της κατάβαθης ατμοσφαίρας. [...] Εμείς σαφτά πήγαμε,

<sup>11</sup>These images are also often depicted in Psycharis's letters and critical essays. In particular, images of water are often used in Psycharis's argumentation, in order to refer to language (see Chapter One).

βουτήξαμε ως τα βάραθρα, μην ξεδιακρίνοντας το χάος από την αβγή. Τι λέγαμε; Ο ήλιος μας θα τα φταίη, που μας αποσκεπάζει και τα φανερά. Δεν είδαμε τα ψαράκια που χαίρουνται την ύπαρξή τους· δεν είδαμε ταπογόνια με την αληθινή προγονικά ζωή που μέσα τους σώζεται. Δεν είδαμε τον εαυτό μας (1905b: 3-4).

The differences between the first and the second editions are not significant. There are a few grammatical changes and some word changes. As the author explained in the second edition, “όταν έχει κανείς την κακή συνήθεια να δημοσιέβη πολλά, δεν πρέπει να πασπατέβη με το παραπάνω τα παλιά του. Κάλλια να κάμη καινούρια” (1905b:10). The differences consist mainly in replacing Constantinopolitan grammar and expressions with more standardised ones. For example: “Μ’ έκαμε σωρό τεμενάδες και μ’ είπε” (1993: 42), becomes in the second edition: “Μου έκαμε σωρό τεμενάδες και μου είπε” (1905b: 29).<sup>12</sup> For some more information regarding these changes see Mackridge 1988: 42-3.

Furthermore, Psycharis’s humorous tone is intensified in the second edition, by adding phrases which are not included in the text of the first edition. For example, to the section with all the self-deprecating phrases, in the phrase: “ [...] εαν και *μείς* είχετε *σπουδάσειν* εν τοις *ιμετέροις* γυμνασίοις και ούτως εμανθάνετε ελληνικά [...]” (1993: 190, the emphasis as it is in the text), is added in the second edition in parenthesis, after ‘*ιμετέροις* γυμνασίοις’, “(από τον Κοραή το μακαρίτη θα τόχε παρμένο αφτό)” (1905b: 219).<sup>13</sup> We see therefore, that there are some changes from the one edition to the next, revealing the author’s preoccupation with the language and the mode of narration, without, however, altering the meaning or the aims of the text to any great extent. The third edition in 1926 followed the second closely, apart from

<sup>12</sup>I use the 1993 edition, which is a faithful reproduction of the first edition of 1888, as it is more accessible to readers than the first edition.

<sup>13</sup>For the author’s explanation of some of these changes from the first to the second edition see Psycharis 1906b: 144n.



a few typographical errors. There are some changes of words and spelling. The 1926 edition has a short introduction in which the author explains why he kept the old spelling. He informs readers that even though his basic grammatical system had evolved after 1913, he had kept the spelling of the first edition in order to remain faithful to the original. There are also some notes at the end (Διάφορες Σημειώσεις) which analyse the reasons behind the author's choices of words and orthography (ibid: 273-280).

## 1.2. Form and content

Even though *To Taξίδι μου* promotes a unified language, there are some standardised expressions or words in *katharevousa*, kept as 'negative examples' of speech. The tone overall is very familiar and sentimental, in particular when the narrator wants to invoke the patriotic feelings of his readers. In other places, there is a messianic tone, as will be explained in the following section. This is related mainly to religious references. Even though the points that are being made regarding the Greek language and culture are clear from the outset, there is a gradual introduction of different voices, which either verify these points or parody their opposites. Thus the narrative multiplies its message by including other voices and other texts.

There is symmetry and logic in the structure of *To Taξίδι μου*. The narrative starts and ends with the same injunctions and there are redundancies in each chapter, in order to make the main points clear. The form differs from what one expects in a novel. The chapters express different ideas, yet with a common theme: to promote the development of Greek culture through the use of the demotic language and to affirm the arrival of a future Greek poet who will guide his people. The general impression remaining at the end of each chapter, however, is taken up again in the following one,

either to confirm the same argument or idea or to present it from a different angle. For example, in the chapter ‘Χαμένα Λόγια’, ‘Wasted Words’ (186), the narrator plays with the meaning and the connotations of this title. He expresses his fear that his words would have no impact on the opinions of Greek schoolmasters, who were advocating the use of *katharevousa*, at the expense of the natural demotic language (thus his words would be wasted). In the next chapter, the narrator confesses ironically that there was no other place in the world with a language such as that spoken in Athens, and he takes back his previous accusations: “Όσα είπα τα παίρνω πίσω” (188) thus literally confirming, in this playful framework, that his words were ‘wasted’, since he had not even convinced himself.

This form was unique in the prose fiction of the period; it represented a transition in the author’s writing from critical essays to prose fiction. In general, the plot consists of various incidents where reality merges with fiction in the various stages of the author’s journey, and the characters depicted represent specific ideas. The first chapter presents the narrator preparing for the journey. As he explains, he wants to meet his Greek compatriots in order to feel challenged again, because nobody in France has ever challenged him – implying a difference in temperament between Greeks and Western Europeans (41). He takes his grandmother’s advice on how to behave when he goes to Greece. The dialogue between narrator and grandmother gives Psycharis the opportunity to present the linguistic issue in Greece and its implications:

Εμένα, θα με γελάσης με τα λόγια σου; Σε κατάλαβα και βλέπω που θέλεις να με φέρης. Τους δασκάλους και τη γλώσσα τους πολεμάς να ξεπαστρέψης. Και ποιόνα ελπίζεις νάχης μαζί σου; Όλος ο κόσμος λέει τη γλώσσα μας βάρβαρη· εσύ λες που να μην την ξέρουμε είναι ντροπή. Εμείς φωνάζουμε που διόρθωση θέλει· εσύ γράφεις που διόρθωση θέλει το κεφάλι μας (Psycharis 1993: 47).

The narrator goes on to discuss French ideals and life in Paris, a city he worships. This is followed by a description of the atmosphere at Victor Hugo's funeral, and his conviction that Greek poets could learn a lot from him.<sup>14</sup> He expresses his concern that there has not been a poet of comparable status in Greece, to speak the language of people, as Victor Hugo did in France for the French people.<sup>15</sup> In subsequent chapters, the narrator talks about the first stop on the journey, the author's native Constantinople.<sup>16</sup> The sight of St. Sophia, the greatest monument of Byzantine glory turned into a mosque, elicits the expression of his anti-Turkish feelings. While in Constantinople, he also notices with disappointment that the Greeks there imitated foreign manners and used 'foreign' languages, and as a proof he quotes in the text several phrases from local newspapers, written in the official *katharevousa*, which seemed to have French or German linguistic structures. This incites the narrator to remark with irony: "Τι καλά είταν τουλάχιστο που ήξερα γαλλικά και γερμανικά! Α δεν τα ήξερα, δε θα μπορούσα να καταλάβω λέξη απ' όσα έγγραφαν οι εφημερίδες" (73).

The narrator's next visit is to the island of Chios, claimed as the birthplace of Homer. This part of the journey is associated with Psycharis's theory about the creation of the Homeric epics. Through the narrator's conversations with locals, Psycharis suggests that Homer was not one person but many different poets, coming

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<sup>14</sup>Victor Hugo is projected as the precursor of contemporary Greek poets, while he is also compared to the ancient tragedians.

<sup>15</sup>Hugo had been considered in France as the 'father' of all poets of his era. The notable climate of emotion provoked by his death and funeral is narrated by Maurice Barrès in *Les Déracinés* (1897): "Partout des écussons dans des trophées de drapeaux affichaient comme des devises glorieuses les titres de ses œuvres. Leurs noms, toujours jeunes dans l'esprit de ce peuple parisien, habitué des théâtres ou des lectures par livraisons, protestaient contre l'idée de la mort. Un immense voile de crêpe, dont on avait essayé de tendre l'angle droit de l'Arc de Triomphe, paraissait, des Champs-Élysées, une vapeur, une petite chose déplacée sur ce colosse triomphal" (Barrès 1930: 430), in the chapter of the novel entitled "La Vertu Sociale d'un Cadavre" which refers to the funeral of the poet.

<sup>16</sup>Although Psycharis was born in 1854 in Odessa, he spent three of his childhood years there and considered it his native city (Kriaras 1981: 28).

from the people, narrating stories about the problems of their own kind. These stories were orally transmitted from village to village and were kept alive through repetition and variation. By implication, the plurality of voices, and the simplicity of their creation, were instrumental in forming the author's views for a 'model' of 'oral literature' (see Chapter One). It seems that the author conducted the bulk of his linguistic research in Chios, as he points out in different chapters how helpful or not the inhabitants of certain villages had been to his work.

Finally, reflecting his visit to Athens, his preaching tone intensifies; he found it unreasonable that Athens, the only liberated territory he visited, should cultivate a language that suggested submission.<sup>17</sup> The tone culminates in his vision of being chased out of the city and bitten by 'domestic dogs', another allegory referring to the opposition the author faced there from Chatzidakis and other linguists. There was, nevertheless, something positive gained from that part of his visit: the narrator noted that people in Piraeus spoke plainly, feeling proud of the language of everyday life. This gave hope that maybe one day a significant poet would appear from among these people.

The narrative ends on a strong, patriotic note, with the chapter 'Ελληνικός στρατός', in which Psycharis quotes his literary precursor, Solomos, stating that the Greek nation must have 'physical' and 'intellectual' independence (201). According to the narrator, geographical space is important in relation to linguistic freedom and physical freedom. Most of the areas visited by the narrator, and others referred to in the narrative, were not yet part of the Greek state. At the same time, linguistic behaviour is always associated in the narrative with a specific area: where colloquial language seems to predominate, like Piraeus for example, then that area and its

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<sup>17</sup>Psycharis was visiting Athens for the first time (Beaton 1994: 312).

inhabitants are praised, while various allegories are used to express scorn for those areas where colloquial language is avoided, as in Athens which is portrayed like the castle in which the ‘sleeping beauty’ – the correct form of language – was still not awakened. Therefore, under the guise of its fictionality, the narrative could function as an account of what dialects and what attitudes existed and where.

## 2. Didactic strategies

### 2.1 Religious references

*To Taξίδι μου* is an indicator of all Psycharis’s fiction that was to follow, establishing the main ideological points which recur in his writing.<sup>18</sup> However, the form was not repeated in any of his other novels. It was a tentative approach, something between an essay, a humorous account of a journey and a folktale, and it is significant that the author did not attempt to translate it into French. Ideas referring to the development of Greek language, culture and traditions are presented in specific narrative ways. There are in particular two structures which organise the narration and enhance its didacticism. First, the religious connotations of certain chapters allude to the structure of parables in general, a pattern that can easily be recognised by readers.<sup>19</sup> Second, there are folktale references which create a more context-specific didacticism. The main function of these narrative schemes is to promote the views of the author, in other words to ‘spread the message’.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup>As Glinos pointed out in the 1930 edition of *Αγνή*: “Μέσα στο ‘Ταξίδι’ είναι όλος ο Ψυχάρης, ο επιστήμονας, ο λογοτέχνης, ο κριτικός, ο μαχητής, ο άνθρωπος. Είναι το ‘έργο’ του. Μπορούσε και να πεθάνει ύστερ’ απ’ αυτό χωρίς να χάσει τίποτε από τον ιστορικό του ρόλο. Όλες οι ικανότητες του Ψυχάρη συντράξαν για να συνθέσει με μιας το έργο αλάκαιρης (sic) της ζωής του” (1930: 29-30).

<sup>19</sup>“Every parable [or] more generally, every story of an ‘exemplary’ nature is sooner or later designated, by the parabolic text itself, as needing interpretation, that is, as containing a meaning other (or more) than the immediate meaning of the events it recounts” (Suleiman 1993: 30).

<sup>20</sup>This effort is comparable to that of the early Christians to “spread their message by parable and allegory” (Holquist 1981: 180).

Before the actual journey described in the narrative, the narrator experiences an epiphanic moment, triggered by the emotion he felt at Victor Hugo's funeral. That evening, the vision of the future Greek poet was revealed to him, as he presents it in the chapter entitled 'Ο Ποιητής'. In that vision, the future Greek poet comes like a light, in order to create the language of the people and free them from cultural stagnation:

Δεν ξέρω γιατί μήτε πως, μα δεν έννοιωθα πια κούραση καμιά. Ξέχασα βάσανα και πόνους. Με φάνηκε πως ξανάνιωνα ξαφνικά. Αθάνατες ελπίδες με περεχούσαν την ψυχή. Γύρισα να δω και κάτω κάτω, σαν ασημένια γραμμή, στα μέρη της ανατολής, έβλεπα τον ορίζοντα να σπρίζει· φάνηκε σα μια χαραμάδα στον ουρανό. Είταν η αβγή. Φως! το φως! Να και το φως που ζητούσα. Όχι! όνειρο δεν είταν! Είταν αλήθεια που ΤΟΝ είδα και το θυμούμαι καλά τώρα που σας το διγούμαι. Κάποιος έρχουνταν, κάποιος φαίνονταν εκεί κάτω. Όσο ξάπλωνε η αβγή το κατάσπρό της ρούχο, τόσο και κείνος προχωρούσε. Έλαμπε στα χαράματα μέσα· μαζί με τον ήλιο ανέβαινε, και το πρόσωπό του έπλεγε μέσα στις ολόχρυσες αχτίδες σα σε μια θάλασσα φως. Το ποδάρι του βαριά χτυπά τη γη. Τα μάτια του καίνε σαν ταστέρια. ΝάΤΟΣ εκείνος που προσμένω [...] (59-60).

The vocabulary of that paragraph has, without doubt, religious connotations and the vision alludes to the coming of a Messiah. This impression is intensified by the use of capital letters for ΤΟΝ, ΤΟΣ, referring to the poet-Messiah. The narrator takes on the role of John the Baptist "who preached the Good News to the people and urged them to change their ways" (Luke 'Good News' 3: 18-19). The scene cited above could be referring indirectly to the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist. During the baptism, the heaven opened and the Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove (ibid: 21-22). Similarly, in the text, it is suggested that when the poet comes, heaven will pave his way with light. The impression created by the image of light is reinforced in the following chapter, which is entitled 'Πτωχοπρόδρομος', literally meaning 'poor



precursor'. The fact that John the Baptist is called Prodromos in Greek, makes the identification of the narrator with the Baptist all the more obvious.<sup>21</sup> The narrator wonders when the time will come for Greek culture to find its saviour and, in this chapter, the poet is openly addressed as Christ and Saviour: "[π]ότε, πότε θα μας έρθης, πότε θα σε διουν τα μάτια μας και θα σε χαρούν οι καρδιές μας, Χριστέ μου και σωτήρα, νέε δημιουργέ, νέε πλάστη της γλώσσας μας της νέας;" (61).<sup>22</sup> The arrival of the poet will be accompanied by all sorts of miracles that will take place in nature and in the hearts of people. The invocation of miracles can be interpreted as another way of signalling the arrival of Jesus, because only he could make these wonderful things happen: "θα μαλακώσης τις πέτρες· θα σέρνης κατόπι σου τα θεριά" (61).<sup>23</sup> Since the vision of the new poet comes to the narrator after the funeral of Victor Hugo, it is plausible to infer that the death of one poet signifies the birth of another, almost as if a resurrection of the Ancient Greek glory were about to take place, given that Victor Hugo had earlier been compared to the Ancient Greek writers.<sup>24</sup> There are other, less overt references to the Christian tradition in the narrative, from which one could distinguish similarities with the life of Jesus being sought in the narrator's experiences on his journey, thus giving him the status of a saviour. For example, when the narrator enters the village of Piryi in Chios, the welcome he receives from the locals resembles the scene when Jesus enters Jerusalem

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<sup>21</sup>As pointed out by Beaton (1988: 50), the title also alludes to a literary work from the Middle Ages written in the vernacular of the period.

<sup>22</sup>It is significant that Pallis suggested also a metaphorical association with religious relevance regarding the reception of Psycharis's text by the intellectuals of the Diaspora, who saw it as a sort of guide to their endeavours (in L.K. 1938: 10).

<sup>23</sup>Similarly powerful images, though with no religious undertones, are described in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, where the main character is able to subdue the masses and soften their hearts (Chapter Four of the thesis).

<sup>24</sup>Not only religious but also pagan allusions are mingled in the chapters 'Ο Ποιητής' and 'Πτωχοπρόδρομος', in order to emphasise the importance of the future poet. The awaited poet is also described as 'Orpheus', who will go down to Hades and come back into the light with the language of the people.

on Palm Sunday: “[...] τους είδα μαζωμένους δεξιά και ζερβιά στους στενούτσικους δρόμους, ανάμεσα στα πέτρινα σπίτια, τον καθένα με το δαδί στο χέρι, κάτασπραντυμένους να με χαιρετούν. Κάθουνουν απάνω στο μουλάρι και προχωρούσα σιγά κ’ έδινα χεριές από δω, χεριές από κει και τα πρόσωπα γελούσαν και σα να δάκριζαν τα μάτια μου” (118).

These religious references serve two main purposes in relation to their didactic intent: to draw the attention of readers to what is being communicated, by using a vocabulary and syntax which would be familiar to them, and to affirm something positive through pleasing images. The specific association between Christ and the future poet of demoticism, although exaggerated, serves to emphasise the importance of the poet’s arrival. It points out how significant the establishment of the demotic language would be for the Greek people. It will be a process of liberation, just as Christ and his Church liberate every believer from the constraints of physical existence with the promise of eternal life. Similarly, the poet of the new nation will create a climate of unhindered cultural prosperity. These inspirational images describing the poet’s arrival might be more persuasive than the linguistic exposés of other chapters. However, this tactic might also have had the opposite effect because the intense tone and the association of the future Greek poet with Jesus might have been considered inappropriate or even blasphemous by readers, despite the narrator’s reassurances, elsewhere, of how highly he valued religion. The possible reaction would not have deterred Psycharis; this tactic can be counted as another one of his didactic devices. The stronger the preaching tone and the greater the possibility of provoking a reaction, the more likely, in his view, that his words would be imprinted in the memories of readers, which is exactly what he intended. As he himself stated in

this text, opposition did not frighten him because he was prepared and wanted to receive and give “Δόξα και γροθιές” (42).

The effect of the religious allusions on the narrative process is, mainly, to reduce the amount of information that is given because most of it is suggested indirectly by the images and vocabulary.<sup>25</sup> Thus the didacticism in this case consists in that relative economy in discourse, which is charged with significance. The arrival of a new poet as a Messiah, predicted in the chapters of *To Ταξίδι μου*, is more effective than a more detailed description of who this person is, and what he would do. Economy of discourse is one of the narrative qualities which the author did not develop in his prose after *To Ταξίδι μου*. Thus, the chapters that are shorter are more pleasing than the longer ones, where the narrator tends to be very analytical about the linguistic issue. Unbeknown to him, it is in the latter, when he tries to be more ‘didactic’, that the narration loses its objective.

The religious imagery could be appreciated by a wide readership, as it would undoubtedly capture the attention of all people who were or had been churchgoers or who had been brought up in the Christian faith. It was especially significant for the Greek people, though, because their community had managed to survive the four hundred years of Turkish Occupation thanks to the Orthodox faith and the role played by the church. Perhaps this was another reason why the author chose this type of allusion. In the second chapter, the narrator’s grandmother reaffirms the link between the Greek church and people, by prompting her grandson to be careful not to create any controversy in relation to religion in Greece: “πρόσεχε, παιδί μου, τη θρησκεία να μην την αγγίξεις. Θρησκεία σε μας πατριωτισμό σημαίνει και τον πατριωτισμό τον έχουμε ανάγκη για την ώρα” (48).

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<sup>25</sup>See also Chapter Two on the function of allegory.

The role of the Church for the Greek nation is recognised in the narrative and the narrator points out that the Patriarchate has kept the nation together: “τετρακόσια χρόνια στάθηκε τούτος ο μικρούτσικος τόπος, – ένα ξύλινο σπίτι, ένα παλιόσπιτο, – το μόνο μας καταφύγιο, η μόνη πατρίδα. Εδώ βαστιούνταν το έθνος” (86). In later years, it became clear from his correspondence that Psycharis valued the importance of the Orthodox faith and Church. He had written to the Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim III in 1902 with reference to the problems created by Pallis’s translation of the Gospels into demotic. The Patriarch responded politely and Psycharis included that response in a separate volume of *Ρόδα και Μήλα* (1902a), as a proof of the respect that the Patriarch had shown him and as a sign of victory for the demotic language, which had been accepted by the Patriarch. Psycharis expresses an almost child-like enthusiasm: “και τώρα, μωρέλλι μου, άνοιξε ταφτιά σου, τσίτωσέ τα μάλιστα. Έχω γράμμα του Πατριάρχη! Απάντηση στο δικό μου!! Γράμμα περίφημο!!! [...] Το κατώρθωσα!! [...] Είναι πολύ φιλικό. Τι λες; Δηλαδή γράφω του Πατριάρχη στην ακέρια δημοτική. Διαβάζει το γράμμα μου και μου αποκρίνεται. Πάει να πη πως η δημοτική έχει δικαίωμα να βγη και σε Πατριαρχεία” (Karatzas 1988: 461).

Furthermore, we should not completely ignore the biographical details, which give another indication as to the reasons why Psycharis employed religious references. He must have been influenced by the work and the views of his father-in-law, Ernest Renan, who had written extensively on religious issues, and whose work *Vie de Jésus* (1863) had been particularly influential and controversial at the time. It is reasonable to assume from the views expressed in his text and what we know of his fighting spirit that Psycharis considered his own work along the lines of the following parable that his father-in-law had recounted to him, and which he repeated in his own essays:

Θυμήθηκα κ' ένα λόγο του μακαρίτη του πεθερού μου, του Renan, που μου τον έγραφε, σαν είμουνα μια φορά στην Ελλάδα [...] 'Θυμήσου το λόγο του Νεεμία που σου έλεγα' [...] Ξανάχιζε ο Νεεμίας τα τειχίσματα της Ιερουσαλήμ κι αποστέλναν οι άλλοι ανθρώπους να του μηνήσουνε (sic) ναρθή, για να του κάμουνε κακό. Τότες τους αποκρίθηκε [...] *'Έργον μέγα εγώ ποιῶ, και ου δυνήσομαι καταβήναι, μήποτε καταπαύση το έργον.'* Νε. 6,3. Έτσι και το σωστό. Η Ιδέα, το Έργο, αφτά είναι τα σπουδαία και τα μόνα. Τίποτις όλα τάλλα (Psycharis 1902a: 70, reprinted together with Psycharis 1907b: 196-70, double numbering, also in Psycharis 1909: 69-70).

In the narrative, the demoticist vision for the Greek language and culture is put in a religious framework through which the didacticism can operate effectively. Firstly, it operates, because the religious elements suggest the need for strengthening the national bonds. Secondly, by adopting the style of a sermon in the narrative, the author reinforces a connection with readers and draws their attention to the importance of the message that is conveyed by imitating familiar structures. It is also worth mentioning the apt remark by Palamas, who wrote in his essay on Psycharis's text that: "ουχί δε σπανίως η γλώσσα του κ. Ψυχάρη υπομιμνήσκει την γλώσσαν των εκκλησιαστικών ρητόρων του έθνους ημών, του Σκούφου και Μηνιάτη, αν και ούτοι μεταχειρίζονται πολλῶ εκλεκτικώτερον ιδίωμα" (Palamas 1960c: 310).

On the other hand, Psycharis does not forget that defining Greek tradition involves more than just the Orthodox faith, which was a product of the Byzantine period. Another important aspect of the Greek tradition was its classical and mythological past. The author's objective was also to create a narrative that could be attributed to the Greek tradition but could equally stand on its own merits as a European literary work. The numerous folktale references in it are an indication of this effort.

## 2.2. Folktale references and elements of ‘metafictional writing’

Psycharis tries to reproduce in the text the stories he had heard in the places he visited in Greece for his research. Although the narrative is logically organised in terms of its argument, something that is to be expected from its didactic tone, it also offers direct access to a different world, one where fantasy and dream take precedence over the realistic exposé, thus blending different forms of narration. To some degree, the author creates a type of magical realism, where elements of reality are transferred to a dreamlike atmosphere to create an ambivalent situation between reality and fantasy (see Carpentier 1995: 103). This is also the opinion of Meraklis, who compares the narrative to some of Márquez’s prose, as mentioned already (1988: 798). At other times, the dream motif, which recurs repeatedly, leads into a folktale.

The term ‘folktale’ (παραμύθι) in Psycharis’s writing can refer to many different types of material. ‘Folktale’ (παραμύθι) in its normally accepted sense is a tale of fantasy with events that would not occur in real life, and characters with supernatural powers or with exaggerated traits. Παραμύθι also implies, metaphorically, an untrue event or a lie. In Psycharis’s correspondence, the term is used mainly to refer to something which is invented and not factual. In relation to literature, it corresponds to any type of fictional narrative in prose, as opposed to verse which has some plot (see for example Karatzas 1988: 30, 31, 34). The term has positive and negative connotations in the author’s writing. In its positive sense, it refers more specifically to the simple stories that the author believed should be written for the Greek readership, as was his own fictional output (see footnote 25 of Chapter One of the thesis). In its negative sense, it refers to something which is fabricated and does not comply with the laws of verisimilitude. For example, the author suggests that Defoe’s novel *Robinson Crusoe* is a ‘παραμύθι’, meaning a lie, in order to emphasise



his view that the writer should exercise certain restraint in the manner of portraying a story, giving primacy to a realist account rather than to an elaborate or more entertaining narrative (see Chapter Five of the thesis). Melissaratou has distinguished three main semantic uses of the word in Psycharis's writing (1990: 197-8).

Psycharis believed that Greek literature was in need of more folktales (in the positive sense of the term), and he described *To Ταξίδι μου* as “παραμύθι, όχι ταξίδι” (1993: 39). Accordingly, the ‘folktale’ as a term and as a technique is present in many parts of *To Ταξίδι μου*. There are a few folktales included in the text, which exhibit both traditional Greek and Western elements. This is evident in particular in the chapter ‘Αρνί και λιοντάρι’ where the narrator introduces his fictional brother Yannis, whose story alludes directly or indirectly to other folktales. Yannis is presented as a harmless giant with supernatural qualities.<sup>26</sup> First, he is compared to Digenis Akritis, a medieval Greek hero, in terms of his prowess and strength. In order to describe him accurately the narrator emphasises the extraordinary things about him, quoting verses from the epic poem about Digenis: “εκ τόπου δε κινούμενος βροντής ήχον ετέλει, ώστε δοκείν σαλεύεσθαι γην τε και πάντα δέντρα” (79), and includes the story of the slaying of the dragon, from the same poem, which is itself like a short folktale. Yannis is also compared to a character from Western tradition, from Rabelais' text *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Both characters, Yannis and Gargantua, are brave and have a huge appetite, feasting on enormous quantities of food. The list of various foods consumed by Yannis brings to mind various such lists of words produced by Rabelais in order to parody the formal French language of his period. Thus the portrayal of Yannis follows the conventions governing folktales, as his physical presence and enormous appetite

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<sup>26</sup>Psycharis presents his fictional brother in *Autour de la Grèce* (1895a) as follows: “Jean mon frère est un enfant de ma fantaisie. Ma fantaisie sait prévoir beaucoup de choses; ce qu'elle conçoit et ce qu'elle veut, c'est mon frère Jean qui l'exécute, Jean mon frère, ce géant qui grand comme une tour, qui est terrible comme le peuple, généreux comme l'hellénisme” (309).

introduce the element of the unbelievable and the fantastic. In this particular chapter alone there are multiple allusions to the use of the folktale because Yannis is also the recipient of other people's folktales. As the narrator explains, no matter how brave he was, at times he behaved like a child, who wanted to listen to stories: “κάθουνταν ήσυχα και καλά στο ζεστό του το κρεββατάκι, – νακούη παραμύθια” (80).

The author created this character in order to entertain readers; it is also possible that apart from entertaining his readers he wanted to convey that certain qualities were essentially Greek and in that way to boost the morale of his Greek compatriots. This idea is confirmed in a subsequent chapter, in which Yannis helps the narrator to chase away not only the ghost of Sultan Mahmut but also all the Turkish army – the enemies of Greeks. In the chapter entitled ‘Ο Μαχμούτης’, the dead Sultan makes an appearance in a dreamlike atmosphere, to challenge the provocative behaviour of the narrator, who was complaining about Turkish rule in Constantinople. The Sultan is finally defeated by the narrator and his brother, who represent symbolically the Greek and European ‘spirit’ that has created the ideals of freedom: “[δ]εν είμαι άνθρωπος, είμαι ιδέα. Δεν είμαι Γραικός, είμαι Εβρώπη. Να το ξέρης· η Λεφτεριά σουλτάνους δε φοβάται” (104). Thus the Ottoman administration is contrasted with the ideals of western civilisation and, by using the comparatively inoffensive method of the folktale, the author manages to make a very strong statement against the former, which would otherwise appear to be plain preaching.

The folktale is also chosen by the author as the characteristic model of oral narrative, created and enjoyed by ordinary people. Psycharis presents his theory about the creation of the Homeric epics, which are compared to folktales, in a conversation between the narrator and his friend from Chios. This presentation could easily be a realistic account of his own conversation with locals when he was conducting his

research. He claims that folktales were narrated in a dialectally mixed language, like the Homeric epics and the folk songs, and yet it was easy for locals to understand them and be entertained and educated by them. Furthermore, he suggests that the process of creating folktales reflected in a wider context the linguistic evolution: “[μ]αζί με τους ανθρώπους τρέχουν και τα παραμύθια. Αποφάσισε αν μπορείς σε τι γλώσσα έγινε πρώτα το παραμύθι. Απ’ αυτά τα διάφορα τραγούδια ίσως βγη πάλε, Κωστάκη μου, καμιά μέρα [...] μια καινούρια Ιλιάδα” (117). The narrator also explains that he noted down the language used by villagers while making them narrate a story: “[μ]ια μέρα με πήγε σε μια γριά κ’ έβαζε τα δυνατά του για να την κάμη να με μιλήση και να με πη κανένα παραμύθι. Τραβιούνταν η γριά και δεν ήθελε. Άρχισε τότες ο γέρος να της λέη τι ζητούσα, για ποιο σκοπό είχα κάμει τόσο μεγάλο ταξίδι, και που γύρεβα να μάθω την προφορά κάθε χωριού [...]” (136). It seems, therefore, that the folktale plays a central role in the demoticist ideology for the following reasons: its simple language, its collective creation and its origins. Even though these characteristics are not necessarily bound to any particular culture, they are viewed by Psycharis as distinctly Greek for the purposes of his literary theory, which is discussed in certain parts of this narrative.

Overall, the more fictional parts of the narrative that resemble or allude to folktales, are dominated by textual features from the Western tradition of folktales. There is, for example, the metaphor of literary language as a sleeping beauty in a palace, awaiting the prince to save her, a common image in Western folktales. In this case, the prince is the poet Victor Hugo, who liberates the language/sleeping beauty through his poetry. The narrator explains how the poet brought a breath of fresh air, opened the windows and the doors and let the light come into the palace to awake the

beauty. This passage also alludes to the French Revolution of 1789, by describing how the palace, the symbol of the Monarchy's power, was taken over by the people.<sup>27</sup>

The presentation of Ancient Greek writers and their work is also given in a folktale atmosphere, introduced by the theme of listening to or reading stories, whilst gathered around the fireplace in winter, which is another Western tradition: “[ά]μα αδειάσω λίγη ώρα το χειμώνα, – όταν πέφτουν όξω τα χιόνια πηχτά πηχτά και κάθουμαι ήσυχα κοντά στη φωτιά μου, – πολύ μ’αρέσει να κουβεντιάζω με τους αρχαίους! Πιάνω ένα βιβλίο και τα λέμε [...] πόσο με διασκεδάζουν τα παραμύθια τους [...]” (159).

Psycharis's folktales are mostly a discussion of other folktales or reproductions of other similar texts with multiple meanings. However, their purpose was to convey the message that the author intended to present through them. The stories discussed thus far, his ‘brother’s’ adventures and the sleeping beauty theme, have a hidden message: they suggest liberation from a previous state of oppression. The author’s aim is to reinforce the reader’s belief in a Greek literary tradition and the language of the people, even where the actual reference is to the French language and culture. The tradition embraced by the narrator included all the Ancient Greek texts, medieval epic poetry and folk songs. After the period of the folk songs, Psycharis believed that the transition to a more complex literary production should benefit from the creative assimilation of the themes and narrative devices that corresponded to folktales, because it was still premature to expect a stylistically highly developed prose fiction. This was also the case, because of the emphasis on national identity that prevailed in the period, as opposed to the individuality presupposed in the novels *per se*. As is explained in the narrative, ‘self’ means nothing, only the collective ‘national

<sup>27</sup> An insistence on images of light associated with vision, clarity, awakening, is noted in these stories included in *To Ταξίδι μου*, as well as in the story *Ο Μάγος*, where the magician concentrates the rays of sun in his crystal to achieve the required transformation (as discussed in Chapter Two).

soul' means something: "τα γενικά ζητήματα είναι τα μόνα σπουδαία ζητήματα. Για τούτο, όπου γράφω το *εγώ*, είναι τύπος ρητορικής· *εγώ* τίποτις δεν είμαι· η εθνική ψυχή κάτι σημαίνει· προσπάθησα να δώ που και που τι έχει μέσα της αυτή η ψυχή, και μιλώντας για μένα, συλλογιόμμαι τους άλλους. Το βιβλίο μου είναι παραμύθι, όχι ταξίδι" (39, the emphasis as it is in the text).

The use of the folktale elements exemplified the attempts of the period to develop prose fiction. Apart from transporting readers to an imaginary situation, folktales are engaging and didactic, leaving behind a message even when there is no closure. In the genre of the fantastic, there is a breach of reality in order to introduce something unbelievable. "The dominant world-view of the text is very similar [to the reader's] and the laws of verisimilitude coincide largely with [his] [but] the narrator introduces a [different] level of reality against the background of this logical world, [...] which contradicts the world of reason [...]" (Chanady 1985: 5). The fantastic also prevails in those parts of *To Taxídi mou*, which are not presenting a specific folktale but are invoking a certain atmosphere of mystery and ambivalence. There are, for example, some episodes in which it is clear that the narrator emphasises the use of correct language but the messages implied are given so allegorically that it becomes difficult to distinguish the boundaries between 'reality' and 'fantasy'.

In the chapter 'Cabinet de lecture', for example, the presentation of a very realistic episode, the narrator's visit to a literary club in Constantinople, develops gradually into a confusing situation until it becomes completely unbelievable. The narrator is on his own in the club, and starts glancing at the local newspapers. After some creaky noises, the newspapers start projecting French letters and words on top of the Greek ones. The narrator explains that the French expressions come to mind because of the unnatural, 'foreign', *katharevousa*, but the episode does not end there.

After a long list of comparisons between the two languages (French and Greek), the narrator starts hearing strange noises again. He falls asleep and although he is sleeping, he explains that he is still in the process of reading the newspapers and listening to the same noise, so that readers are unable to determine whether what follows is part of a dream or not. The noise is finally ‘explained’ as the laughter of Europeans, when the narrator finds himself inside the map of Europe surrounded by Europeans of all nationalities laughing at the Greeks, who do not know how to use their own language. The chapter ends on that second level of reality, when the narrator explains that he did not know how to respond to their contempt and therefore went home. The message is very clear in this story: Greeks, misled by the claims of those who saw in *katharevousa* an association with the Ancient Greek language, became the laughing stock of civilised Europeans. However, the atmosphere of paradox and the idea of laughter, which plays on the comic undertones, prevent the didacticism from being perceived as too tedious.

There is also a portrayal of a dream in *To Taξίδι μου*, which leads to events that could have happened in reality or could equally be a continuation of the same dream. In literary terms, this is the case when Psycharis’s writing could be described as a type of magical realism. In magical realism, the “portrayal of imagined events in dreams is given as objectively real” (ibid: 29). The author usually aims to invert the situation and convince readers that the improbable situation is possible. In magical realism, the unbelievable becomes part of reality, something which shakes the foundations of both.

A dream is the vehicle for carrying a realist reference blended with elements of the fantastic or improbable in the chapter ‘Οικιακά Κυνάρια’. At the end of his journey, the narrator discusses his last night in Athens, during which he had a



disturbed sleep. He dreamt of donkeys being transformed into dogs, barking at him and trying to bite him. The next morning, he read in the newspapers that he had indeed been bitten by dogs the night before and that he was leaving for Paris to find a cure. This allegorical episode probably refers to Psycharis's opponents, who might have verbally attacked him publicly for his ideas on Greek language. The obvious confusion in the narrative time sequence aside (the newspapers seem to report the news even before it happens), the article could indeed have appeared in a local paper, as it is presented in the text, or it could equally be a fictional piece of work. The narrator's dream that 'predicts' the occurrences introduces a paradox, though the whole episode is presented in a realistic mode with a sarcastic tone. The reader is left to believe that the story described could have been a real experience – a report in the newspaper – until the narrator starts analysing the irregularity in the formation of the past tense of the verb 'to bite' in Ancient Greek. It is then confirmed that everything in the narrative has been created for the pleasure of analysing language. The story is left without any attempt to give an explanation one way or the other, and the emphasis is placed on the Greek language and its correct usage. It is as though language takes over plot or action by turning the focus directly on itself, not designating anything outside its own signs.

Therefore, in *To Tačīdi μov*, these strategies (fantastic and a type of magical realism) have a didactic intent. They aim to surprise readers and make them take notice of what is being conveyed. The playful tone of the narration prevents the didacticism from destroying the fictional elements of the work. In particular, in the story where there are elements of magical realism, one could argue that the didacticism is even stronger because there are no clear boundaries between the real

and the unreal and anything is possible. In any case it is as if the author were winking at readers, signalling that they should trust him.

In conclusion, we have seen that the folktale framework aids the author to deliver a great deal of diverse information to readers. On the other hand, the elements of the fantastic which function as metafictional strategies, present two distinct levels of reality, overlapping, only in order to cancel each other out and promote the role of language as the ultimate reality. The didactic aims of folktales and metafictional strategies are common and different at the same time. Their common aim is to invest the didacticism of the narrative with an entertaining tone. However, while folktales are selected because of their ability to travel across linguistic and geographical borders, they are also considered a more 'secure' mode of writing, as a national, collective creation. The elements of the fantastic and magical realism introduced into the text are intended to disorient the readers, in order to subvert certain factions in Greek society, which the author considered ineffective and wrong. Similar to what Michel Butor described as the function of magical realism, the objective of this strategy in *To Tačίδι μου* is "[to criticise the ossified reality], [...] in reacting upon it, [and] suggesting that we transform it, that we reinstate what is out of place" (Butor's points are cited in Zipes 1983: 99).

### 3. Polyglossia and false polyphony<sup>28</sup>

This section will explore three different cases encountered in *To Tačίδι μου*. Firstly the case of one speaker using different varieties of the same language, for

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<sup>28</sup>Polyglossia is the existence of different languages or different varieties of the same language. In the case of *To Tačίδι μου* the inclusion of different varieties of the same language serves to emphasise the message that *katharevousa* creates confusion. Polyphony can be described as a "multi-voicedness counterpoint [which] presumes a plurality of fully valid voices within the limits of a single work" (Bakhtin 1999: 34). In *To Tačίδι μου* the voices that express views opposed to the narrator are used only as a pretext because the authorial voice very quickly dismisses their validity. Thus my suggestion that it is a case of false polyphony, as not all views are given the same opportunity.

example the narrator, in order to show the distance that separated *katharevousa* from the demotic. Secondly there is the example of different voices presenting the same expression which is used in order to put forward a message of detachment for Greek culture from the burden of the Ottoman past. Finally in certain parts of the narrative different characters present different points of view, such as the grandmother Yannoula, and other fictional characters who are not named. However, these do not manage to acquire a viable independent existence alongside the points of view of the author/narrator. Let us examine some examples referring to these cases.

As mentioned above, there is no real action taking place in the text, just discussions between the narrator and the characters or between the narrator and the prospective readers, who are treated as addressees. When there is some type of action, this is transferred to the level of the fantastic. Throughout the various discussions about language, however, often the same message seems to be expressed by different agents. Various formulaic sequences appear in the text repeatedly, at times attributed to individual characters, at others to the narrator, functioning as rhetorical examples, suggesting the confusion created by commonly used *katharevousa* expressions. We are told, for example, that the fictional brother Yannis uses such expressions in his everyday speech: “[γ]ια κάθε πράμα που έκαμνε και ρωτούσες γιατί τόκαμνε έτσι κι όχι αλλιώς, [...] σ’ αποκρίνονταν πάντοτε: – ‘Συνήθεια γαρ επεκράτησεν παρ’ ημίν’. Αμα μ’ έβλεπε στο δρόμο με κανένα φίλο: – ‘Χαίρετον’, μας φώναζε από δύο μίλια μακριά και γελούσε” (82). Similarly, Yannis’s friend Platanissis constantly uses the expression: “[μ]ας γίνεται λόγος!” (85). The parodic use of standardised phrases is intended to emphasise the fictionality of these two characters, who are themselves caricatured. But even more than the characters themselves, it is their language which is derided. The characters belong to the folktale world, the reader does not expect

them to act in a realistic mode but at the same time, s/he becomes more aware of how the language is used, and notices that it does not operate as a tool of communication.

A similar point is also made about written language, suggesting that *katharevousa* is like a foreign tongue. In the chapter ‘Cabinet de lecture’ various phrases frequently used in newspaper discourse are included as examples, and the narrator explains why the supposedly Greek phrases are a direct translation of French expressions: “[ε]ίναι κάτι συνηθισμένα και κακορίζικα γαλλικά, που ακούω στο Παρίσι κάθε μέρα. Τα λέει κανείς, άμα δεν ξέρει τι να πη. Κατάλαβα τότες που έπρεπε να διαβάζω ανάποδα: αντίς πρώτα να τα διαβάζω γραικικά, είταν πολύ πιο σωστό να τα λέω μέσα μου γαλλικά κ’ έπειτα να κοιτάζω τα τυπωμένα γράμματα” (74). This passage exemplifies a ‘multi-textual’ weaving in each phrase. An attempt is even made to represent it somehow by mixing together two phrases, Greek and French: “εΙΛΛάΡμRβEαNvAεΙτTόLvA κPόEπIοNvE. Στην ίδια γραμμή έβλεπα δυο ψηφιά και πάντοτε τα γαλλικά ξεπερνούσαν τα γραικικά, με τρόπο που φαίνονταν και καλύτερα” (72) (‘Il prenait la peine’ – ‘ελάμβανε τον κόπον’). The point is to give an example of an incomprehensible language, of meaningless signifiers, which reflect an unrealistic situation. What is suggested with these examples is that, when *katharevousa* is used in everyday speech it sounds unnatural and devoid of meaning, and in writing it appears like a foreign language.

The narrator also points out in a humorous way that the Ancient Greek linguistic forms make the discourse appear more important than the things or actions it denotes. Thus, even when an expression refers to something unpleasant or unacceptable, the type of language used, allows the speaker, metaphorically, to keep his/her distance from what is said: “– ‘Διότι, μ’ απαντά, η αρχαία είναι ευγενεστέρα και διά του ε καταντά ευγενικώτερος ο τύπος’ [...] Τώρα καταλάβαινα ξαφνικά τι θα

πη ορθή κρίση” (105). Another rhetorical example is a comical incident, presented for the sake of argument: a thief is caught stealing from a jewellery shop and a policeman arrests him. The narrator playfully points out that there is no reason to worry because by using *katharevousa*, he could prove that he is not such a low-class person: “[ά]μα μ’ αρπάξει και με πη: – ‘Εσύ είσαι ο κλέφτης;’, τον κοιτάζω με περήφανο μάτι και για να καταλάβη τι άνθρωπος είμαι, του λέω σοβαρά: – ‘Κύριε αστυνόμε, ουκ ενομίζω. Άπιθι εούν: κλωψ γαρ ειμί, ουχί δε κλέφτης’”(111). This story emphasises the significance of language in everyday life, as everything we believe or do can be translated into language. It also satirises the pomposity of *katharevousa* and the false claims that it was the correct form of language. As mentioned above, one of the aims of the narrative was to suggest with specific examples how distorted the view, held by many people in Greece especially by schoolmasters, was that, by being closer to the Ancient Greek language, *katharevousa* made everything sound more noble.

However, the narrator explains that the false assumptions regarding the importance of *katharevousa* were also made by ordinary people, who felt compelled to abandon their natural way of communicating for something that would make them sound more educated. The artificiality of *katharevousa* is noted in the speech of a Greek mother who wishes to conform to the norm and tries to fight her natural inclination, ending up, inevitably, speaking a ‘foreign’ language in every aspect; foreign to herself and her family, irrelevant to the needs of the communicative act, and deviating from the grammar of Greek language. This is given in another story that the narrator presents together with his explicit commentary at the end:

Μια μέρα περνούσα από ένα σπίτι μπροστά. Στην πόρτα στέκουνταν ένα παιδί δώδεκα χρονώ, με χαρούμενο πρόσωπο και μάτια γελαστά. Φορούσε στιβάλια ψηλά, φτερνίστρες, και βαστούσε καμτζίκι στο χέρι. Είταν έτοιμο

να φύγη. Έλεγε της μάννας του που είτανε μέσα στο σπίτι: – ‘Μάννα, θα πάω καβάλλα’. – ‘Να μη σ’ ακούσω, να μη σ’ ακούσω! μάνιζε η μητέρα του. Τέτοιες λέξεις να μη λες και θα σε δείρω! Να πης: θα υπάγω να ιππεύσω’. Σάστιζε το παιδί σα να μη καταλάβαινε. Η μάννα του και κείνη δεν έβλεπε και δεν έννοιωθε τι βάρβαρη γλώσσα πολεμούσε να μάθη του παιδιού της, όταν τόβαζε να λήη ταναλυτικό μας το θα με ταρχαίο το *ιππεύσω* και το μεσαιωνικό το *υπάγω*. Νόμιζε πως τόντις κάτι κατάφερνε και δεν καταλάβαινε η ίδια το τρομερό λάθος που έκαμνε. Κατάλαβα τότες όμως εγώ που η μόνη ξένη γλώσσα στην Ελλάδα είναι η καθαρέβουσα [...] (185).

The artificiality in the above extract is located in the different registers used by the speaker. Thus, it is not only the narrator who uses quoted speech and other ‘texts’, in the narration of events, but also the characters, whose utterances are clearly taken from others, possibly more educated speakers, according to their perception. The examples of quoted speech, voices of others, and ‘foreign texts’, implied that Greek culture needed to find a path of independence and authentic expression.

I will now discuss how an interesting ‘displacement of discourse’, the repetition of one expression in the speech of various different characters through a process of internalising the marked expression in the narrator’s thoughts, helps to emphasise the author’s arguments regarding Greek language and culture. This displacement falls in the second category that I outlined in the beginning of the section. The process of ‘displacement of discourse’ was analysed by Bakhtin in Dostoevsky’s novels (see Bakhtin 1999: 217 & 238).

The narrator takes the boat to travel from Constantinople along the Bosphorus. He is offered a very nice seat in a privileged position with a good view. Contemplating the sea, he thinks about the future of the new Greek nation, but a steward interrupts his reverie. The narrator is informed that he must change his position because the captain needs to work in the place where he is sitting. The Turkish steward utters the phrase ‘Καπιτάν μπουρντά γκελίορ’ (‘the captain is



coming'), which is also the title of the chapter. This phrase makes a great impression on the narrator, who thinks about it and repeats it in his internal monologue. The phrase gradually acquires a stronger tone as it is repeated four times in the chapter after the first utterance. It initiates a cycle of thoughts about the period of Constantinople's conquest by the Turks, while the narrator imagines how these words could have been used by the first Turk who entered the city: "[τ]ι παράδοξη φράση! Ο καπετάνιος είταν Τούρκος, ομορφάθρωπος, αψηλός· έμοιαζε σα να είταν όλο μαζί αφέντης σκληρός κι αντρειωμένο παλληκάρι. Με φάνηκε που στα μάτια του μέσα, στο πρόσωπό του έβλεπα με μιας όλη την Τουρκιά. Τέτοιος θα είταν, έλεγα μέσα μου, κι ο πρώτος ο Τούρκος που πάτησε τούτο το χώμα, ο πρώτος κατακτητής" (94). The chapter ends with the narrator's admission that: "[η] ίδια φράση όλο μ' έδερνε το νου, όλο μ' έτρωγε το κεφάλι. Όλο έλεγα μέσα μου σιγά σιγά· 'Καπιτάν μπουρντά γκελίορ!'" (95). In the next two chapters the narrator continues his contemplation of the conditions that might have contributed to the Ottoman Occupation. It seems as though his thoughts provoke the appearance of the ghost of Sultan Mahmut and at the end of this imaginary encounter, the Sultan and his army confront the narrator and his brother verbally. The giant brother manages to chase away the Turks with ease, uttering the same phrase in a strong, frightening voice: "Έρχεται και νάτος! Ταφεντικό σας φτάνει! [...] Εμένα έδειχτε στους Τούρκους με φοβέρες και γίνουνταν όλεθρος η φωνή του· – 'Δρόμο, δρόμο τα σκυλιά. Καπιτάν μπουρντά γκελίορ!'" (104). We see, therefore, how this Turkish phrase, which is uttered in an insignificant incident, is repeated in the thoughts of the narrator by four different agents, and acquires a particular value: it is uttered by the original speaker, the Turkish steward of the boat, the imaginary first Turkish soldier to enter Constantinople in 1453, the narrator himself, who repeats it a few times to himself and, finally, through his

fictional brother, the words are ‘returned’ to the Turks, in a moment of wishful thinking that envisages the conquerors being chased away from the city. The point of this displacement is to look away from agents of speech, characters or even action, to the essence of language. The text aims to put the emphasis on what is being said, on the message of the communication rather than on who delivers it. The meaning of the phrase ‘the captain is coming’, suggests a literal and metaphorical liberation for Greek culture. The phrase is an echo of the religious allusions discussed before, signalling the arrival of the new poet as Messiah, a very clever implicit multiplication of the message of the narrative.

The above example suggests an attempt to represent different voices which use the same expression, though in each case this expression acquires a different tone and connotation. However, the falsity of polyphony in *To Taξίδι μου* is exemplified more prominently through voices and views that do not agree with the narrator but are not given an equal chance to convince the readers. The narrative starts with Yannoula’s remarks to the narrator. The dialogue between the two is used in order to present the views of the latter as opposed to the commonly held views in Greece: “Τι πας να κάμης με τους *ομογενείς*; Όλες σας οι ιδέες διαφορετικές· έλα να τις πάρουμε μια μια. Πρώτα πρώτα, ποτές σου δε θέλησες να πιστέψης που δεν έχουμε στις φλέβες μας μέσα, ίδιο κι *απαράλλαχτο*, των αρχαίων το αίμα [...]” (45) comments Yannoula. However, the views expressed by Yannoula in this chapter are implicitly undermined when she admits: “ποιοι είναι που έχουν *πέραση* στον κόσμο; Όσοι ξέρουν και *κολακέβουν* τους ανθρώπους. Ποιους αγαπούνε στην Ελλάδα; Όσους όλο τα ίδια *κοπανίζουν*” (46), suggesting that there is no real argument behind her points which are only repeating what others have said. In the chapter “*Συμβιβασμός*” the author uses the same technique. The narrator converses with his ‘mentor’ who offers general

advice on how to behave. The advice – in *katharevousa* and with ancient sayings – is treated with contempt by the narrator who proves how wrong it is in effect, especially with regards to language: “Το φρόνιμο είναι να ξέρης μισά τη μια, και μισά την άλλη. Μηδέν άγαν. Παν μέτρον άριστον. Μετριοφροσύνη κοσμεί τον αληθώς άνδρα. Εν τω μέσω κείται η αρετή. Έτσι πέφτουν όλοι σύφωνοι ή να το πούμε καλήτερα, μισοσύφωνοι” (144). At the end the author stresses his point clearly: “Οι γλώσσες που δεν αλλάζουν είναι οι ξεχασμένες, οι πεθαμμένες οι γλώσσες που άνθρωπος πια δεν τις μιλεί” (146). The narrator also converses with a character called Ω, in the penultimate chapter. This character is eager to point out to him the correct declension of verbs. His views are treated with irony because the narrator comments on them in the parenthesis that follows their presentation, guiding that way the reaction of readers: “Οι δε ηροστρατούντες και ζωιλεύοντες (αφτό το ζωιλεύοντες τόλεγε με κάποιο τόνο και σα να καμάρωνε) αγνοούσιν τα τοιαύτα (190, the emphasis as it is in the text). Thus the narrator uses the views expressed by others in order to distort them. The text creates the false impression of representing different views but in reality the author gives the information in such a way as to promote his own beliefs.

Nonetheless, there is the following contradiction: the characters in the narrative refer to other fictional characters like the narrator’s brother, but the voices of ordinary people are presented very realistically. For example, Psycharis presents the views of the people he had met on his visit to Greece, who talked to him about their traditions and told him stories. As opposed to the more ‘fictional’ characters, who allude to specific points by recalling other characters and texts, the Greek peasants are direct and prominent examples of Psycharis’s didactic views, speaking literally and metaphorically on his behalf: “Ο καημένος ο γέρος! Ένα παράπονο είχε – ‘Δεν μπορώ, μ’ έλεγε, να διαβάσω τίποτις απ’ όσα σήμερα γράφουν. Τις φημερίδες δεν τις

καταλαβαίνω κ' έτσι δεν ξέρω και τι γίνεται στον κόσμο. Ας μας κάμουν και μας ένα βιβλίο. που να νοιώθουμε λίγο τι λέει!” (137).<sup>29</sup> The rendering of the colloquial language is very faithful, and putting the old man's comment in quotation marks makes the utterance stand out. In this case, one could argue that the author manipulates the views of his most 'authentic characters' to suit his “superior ideological plan” (see Booth 1999: xxiii). Indeed, either the author's views coincide with those of the peasants-turned-characters or the author espouses their views for the purpose of making his points acceptable. It is not clear whether he patronises their way of thinking. The only certainty is the existence of a double voice in the above passage, as the author tries to reach out, to involve readers in his views.

Thus the narrative voice seems to playfully espouse expressions from other hosts in order to put forward a specific point. Similarly, the narrative text is composed of many other texts and references, literary or non-literary.<sup>30</sup> As mentioned above, there is a character (Yannis) who combines elements of both a Greek and a French epic hero. The poetry and the ideals promoted by Victor Hugo are presented as the model to be followed by Greek poets. There are numerous other references with ironical undertones. The title of a Molière play is used to describe the women who frequented the literary salons in Athens: “[ο]ι *femmes savantes* – αι κομπευόμεναι γυναίκες [...] ζούσαν και βασίλεβαν” (169). The narrator also addresses a gathering in an Athenian coffee shop (the traditional ‘καφενείο’) with the well-known rhetorical opening address used by classical orators. The speech turns out to be a joke, subverting the expectations of ‘listeners’ and, of course, readers: “Άνδρες Αθηναίοι, άνδρες Κορίνθιοι, άνδρες Αρκάδες, άνδρες Μωραΐται και επίλοιποι άνδρες, – πολύ να

<sup>29</sup> Readers are supposed to understand that Psycharis's text responds to the old man's wish.

<sup>30</sup> When intertextuality is “used explicitly and in order to emphasise the connections of a particular text with the previous body of literature, it takes on a metalinguistic hue; [...] the referent of the discourse is another discourse and not an aspect of empirical reality” (Yannakakis 1990: 72).

προσέχετε τους τενεκέδες! Δεν ξέρετε τι μπορεί άξαφνα να βγη ένας τενεκές [...]" (179). Thus the narrative appears to be almost a pastiche of different texts and a mingling of different voices, most of which are used to parody the conventions that have created them. This unconventional technique challenges notions of originality and authenticity. Even when the narrator stresses that he is the first to write this Modern Greek language, to use the language of the people in literature, this is presented again in an ambivalent tone, not only because he mentions it in a conversation with the dead French poet, but also because after making this statement he quickly adds that his own words had terrified him and he had tried to run away from the responsibility he had assumed: "[μ]ε τρόμαξαν τα λόγια μου και μένα. Έφεβγα γρήγορα και κρύφτουμουν πάλε στις στενάδες μέσα, μακριά. Ωστόσο μ' όλη μου τη θλίψη, μ' έρχονταν κάποτες να γελάσω [...]" (59).<sup>31</sup>

The specific intertextual allusions aim to support the points of the narrative through the authority of established codes and texts. The reliance on shared codes, recognised by the author and well-informed readers alike, and on information familiar to the latter, gives Psycharis's arguments about Greek language and culture validity, because of the implied continuity with the texts and the codes that are recalled. Furthermore, the hidden or explicitly embedded didactic discourse is less noticeable for what it is, in the overall quoted speech and references. Since the narrative is composed of different types of texts, no particular type seems privileged. However, at the same time, none of them seems unacceptable either, unless clearly stated otherwise in the narrative. Psycharis acknowledges that every literary text is part of a large tradition of other texts that precede and follow it, and is always judged against them, and that his work was not immune to this judgement either. This is highlighted

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<sup>31</sup>The ambivalence of laughter and crying indicates that everything should be seen from both sides as well.

allegorically in the fantastic scene in which the Ancient Greek writers evaluate the modern writers in Greece and suggest their inadequacies by laughing at them and at their work:

Αλήθεια, μόλις το είπαν κ' ήρθε τρεχάτα ίσια με το μέρος που κάθονταν οι αρχαίοι, ένα παιδί ασπροντυμένο· έφερνε μέσα στην ποδιά του ένα σωρό φημερίδες και βιβλία· από πίσω του έρχονταν όσοι είχανε γράψει τα βιβλία κι όσοι γέμιζαν κάθε μέρα τα δημόσια φύλλα. Βρέθηκα και γω μέσα σ' αφτούς. Τότες είδα μια ομηρική σκηνή [...] Έβαζαν τον καθένα να διαβάση όσα είχε γραμμένα ή βιβλίο ή μέσα σε καμιά φημερίδα [...] Άμα πέρασε το πρώτο του κατεβατό ο πρώτος που έπρεπε να διαβάση, τους άκουσα και πάτησαν ένα γέλιο, που κόντεψε τόντις η Ακρόπολη να πλακώσει την Αθήνα. Τα χρειάστηκα κ' έφυγα μάνη μάνη, να μη με βάλουν και μένα στη μέση· είναι ώρες που πολύ πολύ δε μ' αρέσουν οι αρχαίοι! Νόμιζα πως έβλεπα, στον Όλυμπο απάνω, τους αθάνατους θεούς να ξεκαρδίζονται από τα γέλοια, όσο τους κερνούσε κουτσαίνοντας ο Έφαιστος (168).

The laughter in the above extract repeats the earlier scene, where the whole of Europe laughs at the Greeks in one of the narrator's visions: "Απάνω στο χάρτη στέκουνταν οι Εβρωπαίοι, όλοι με την αράδα, ο Γάλλος στη Γαλλία, στη Γερμανία ο Γερμανός [...] κι ο κάθε λαός φορούσε ρούχα ή πράσινα ή κόκκινα ή κίτρινα, με το χρώμα που είχε στο χάρτη η κάθε χώρα. Όλο μαζί είταν παράξενο κ' έμοιαζε σαν αποκριάτικο [...]. Μιλλιούνια και μιλλιούνια αθρώποι γελούσαν κ' όλο γελούσαν και τελειωμό το γέλοιο τους δεν είχε" (77). With these scenes, the author expresses his self-doubt, and the narrative suggests its own limitations by acknowledging implicitly that it is a tentative approach.

It must also be pointed out that the comical aspect in parts of the narration, the carnivalesque element that prevails throughout many of these references, and the atmosphere they create, are all extremely subversive. In that sense, the didactic



function consists in implicitly and constantly undermining what was the norm in Greek culture at the time; the fiction that was written, the language that was used, and the way people lived their lives. Furthermore, laughter is a motif repeated in the narrative to suggest the misconceptions about the use of the Greek language and literary writing, and thus force the readers to reconsider their attitudes. In the scenes that provoke the laughter, the emphasis lies in the need for renewal in Greek culture. (For an analysis of laughter as a subversive element in a narrative see Bakhtin 1999: 126-27). The rhetorical examples in the text promote the notion of a free exchange of ideas and discourse between different cultures, and the creative use by writers of whatever is available to them, in the hope that Greek culture might ultimately find its deserved place amongst the other European cultures:

[η] μια σπίθα άναψε την άλλη, διαδώθηκαν ιδέες, τέχνες, επιστήμες, ο καθείς έφερνε το μερτικό του και το δάνειζε ταλλουνού. Έτσι μορφώθηκε μια Εβρώπη κι ανάμεσα στους λαούς έπιασε συγκοινωνία διανοητική. Εμείς πίσω, όλο πίσω! Πού η δύστυχη πατρίδα, με των παιδιών της την αμάθεια, την περηφάνεια και την τρέλλα, να μπορέσει και κείνη να ζήσει το μεγάλο, το χαρούμενο βίο της ξαναγεννημένης Εβρώπης! (57).

However, the narrative also represents a potential example of authentic Greek writing, and holds the promise for the future, in foretelling the arrival of the new poet. In accordance with the messianic proclamations of the text, the other side of the dual aspect inherent in everything, becomes obvious at the end, when the scornful laughter is turned into tears of happiness and accomplishment: “[θ]α κατεβώ και πριν ακόμη πατήση το ποδάρι μου στο λέφτερο το χώμα, θα μ’ αρπάξουν οι φίλοι και θα τους αρπάξω. Θαγκαλιαστούμε σφιχτά σφιχτά, η καρδιά μου μέσα μου θα τρέμη που θα πονώ, τα μάτια μου θα φουσκώσουν και ποτάμια δάκρυα θα χύνω” (204).

## Conclusion

*To Tačidi mou* is a unique text in Modern Greek literature. The author combined different narrative techniques and created, in the words of Palamas, “an orchestra of literary genres” (1960c: 315). He used parables, folktales and comical stories, according to the desired emphasis and the points he wished to stress in each case. He also playfully switched roles as he reinvented himself, either as the ‘new poet as Saviour’ or the precursor, who notices and describes the signs of the times. Furthermore, he used different degrees of formality in addressing his readers, getting more distant or more personal, being serious or humorous respectively, in order to achieve the aims set up for the text (Wardhaugh 1992: 107). These were, according to his admission, to amuse readers and to convince them that the colloquial language was appropriate for all occasions, both for everyday communication and for writing prose fiction. The use of these different stances, scholarly and formal or detached and playful, corresponded to both sides of his creative profile and the objective was to persuade readers to embrace his ideas about Greek language and culture.

Psycharis’s ideal of ‘oral literature’ is achieved to an extent, not only because the language of the text is as close as possible to that of everyday oral communication but also because even textual games, such as intertextual references, style shifts and generally playful writing, aim to mimic characteristics of orality, to replace the variations of voice, gestures, and other non-verbal cues that a face-to-face interaction would involve. Overall the playful mode of writing aims to eliminate the distance in time and space between the two poles of communication, author and addressee, contemporary and earlier cultural context, Greek and European culture, plain language and allegorical writing, verisimilitude and fantasy. In that respect the

journey as a metaphor for writing, accomplishes its aims, bringing a sort of proximity and unity between all these agents.

In addition, intertextuality serves to indicate the participation of a particular work in the discursive space of a culture (Culler 1981: 103). In the text this role is accomplished by the narrator commenting repeatedly that Modern Greek culture should aspire to be part of European culture through a reciprocal exchange of ideas in relation to literary writing. Similar views to Psycharis's were presented again, forty years later, by Theotokas in *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα* (1929).<sup>32</sup> This testifies to the fact that *To Ταξίδι μου* remained an innovative but isolated text in the Greek literature of its time.

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<sup>32</sup>“Απάνω από τις τοπικές διαφορές των λαών της Ευρώπης υπάρχει μια κοινή πνευματική και ηθική ζωή, μια κοινή Ευρωπαϊκή παιδεία [...] Είναι ένα ανώτερο επίπεδο όπου καταλήγουν και εναρμονίζονται οι πνευματικές προσπάθειες των λαών της Ευρώπης που πηγάζουν πάντα, άμεσα ή έμμεσα, συνειδητά ή ασυνειδητά, από μια διάθεση κοινή” (1979: 9).

## CHAPTER FOUR

*TONEIPO TOY GIANNIPH: AN ATTEMPT AT  
'SCIENTIFIC' WRITING*

*Tónειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897) promotes the importance of science in all aspects of human activity, and the significance of literature on an equal footing with science. In this chapter I shall outline the author's efforts to reflect contemporary scientific developments in prose and to make his novel part of these advances. I will also discuss the differences between the societies and cultures of France and Greece, as presented in the novel.

*Tónειρο του Γιαννίρη* is the first novel written by Psycharis, if we disregard *To Ταξίδι μου* (1888), which cannot be classified as a novel without raising at least some questions of genre. Before this novel, Psycharis had written the short stories *Ζούλια* (1891), *Ο Μάγος* (1892), *Ο Μουσαφίρης* (1892); these stories were also translated into French (see Introduction, n.18). The French novella *Cadeau de Noces* (1893) also antedated it, and it was time for the author to produce something more substantial in order to test his potential. *Tónειρο του Γιαννίρη* and *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά* are the only two novels written in both Greek and French.<sup>1</sup> This may be an indication that the author considered them major works, worthy of an international audience. It also suggests that Psycharis was trying to establish himself as a renowned writer in two different literary contexts simultaneously, a practice which may have been detrimental to both his careers. As he explained in a letter to his friend Eftaliotis, he believed that the unenthusiastic reception of his work in France was due to the fact that his preoccupations were mainly Greek, while at the same time, he was considered an outsider in Greek literary circles of the period too:

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<sup>1</sup>The novel will be cited as *Tónειρο* from now onwards.

Που λες. Βέβαια μ' έβλαψε. Και κοντά στο νου. "Αφτός γράφει ρωμαίικα. Τι μας μέλει μας για τα γαλλικά του; Δεν έχει την ανάγκη μας, μήτε μεις τη δική του!". Δεν το λένε μα το συλλογιούνται κ' έτσι σ' αφήνουνε στα κρύα του λουτρού (explained Psycharis in his characteristic forthright style, in Karatzas 1988: 177).

Nevertheless, both novels received favourable reviews in Greece, despite the fact that they failed to capture a readership. *Τόνειρο* was praised by the circle of demoticists, and Palamas in particular characterised it as "the novel of the Greek soul" (1960b: 125-36, but written in 1899). It must be noted, however, that the practice of praising one another's work was very common among members of the demoticist group, even though very few of their comments had any objective critical value. This group of writers, friends and collaborators, had made an unofficial pact to support each other's work, in order to reduce the effect of any criticism from the 'enemy camp' of purists.<sup>2</sup> In this respect, the aesthetic value of the texts was not the focus of analysis, and emphasis was placed on the propagation of the demotic language (see also Tziovas 1988).

*Τόνειρο* was published in Greek by Estia, in Athens, and the same year by Calmann Lévy, in Paris. The French version, as Thrylos has remarked (1963), is more condensed, with significantly fewer redundancies. It has not been established with absolute certainty which of the two versions was written first. Even though we can get an idea of Psycharis's intentions from his correspondence with Eftaliotis, there is still some confusion about the order of events. In a letter dated 28 February 1896, Psycharis, writing from Paris, mentioned his new novel to Eftaliotis, informing him that he was about to translate it so that it could be published in Greek, preferably on

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<sup>2</sup>I use the phrase 'enemy camp' as an indication of the aggressive nature of the criticism by one group of the other, which included suggestions of anti-nationalistic attitudes.

the same day as the French publication (Karatzas 1988: 79). A few months later, on 5 September 1896, Psycharis stated that he wanted his novel (*O Γιαννίρης*, as he referred to it) to be published in French and for this reason he had undertaken the translation from Greek into French. He was forced into that decision due to the difficulties of finding a publisher in Greece who would bring out the novel in book form rather than circulating it in weekly or daily instalments (ibid: 75). On 7 December 1896, he informed Eftaliotis that he had just finished the translation and hoped to see it published in March of the following year. He also said that, after financial negotiations with Kasdonis, the Greek publisher, it had been agreed that the novel would be published as a book in April or even March (ibid: 77). By July 1897, however, it was still not published but the author hoped that it would be published in October 1897 (ibid: 83). In another letter, dated 16 September 1897, he mentioned that the novel would be published in October in Paris. By examining all of these letters it seems possible that the French version was published first (21 October 1897). Psycharis also mentioned that he had asked Gavrielidis, the editor of *Acropolis* newspaper, not to publish the news of the French publication of *Γιαννίρης* before its Greek edition (ibid: 92).

Despite the author's efforts to create two different versions in two languages and to publish them almost simultaneously, the novel's publication went unnoticed by the public at large in both countries.<sup>3</sup> Apart from his faithful friends and a few critics the novel was read by just a few people, especially in Greece, as the author himself attests in another of his letters to Eftaliotis (ibid: 105). The effort that Psycharis had put into its creation overshadowed in his mind its possible weaknesses. His bitterness

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<sup>3</sup>It took him more than three years altogether to complete the novel (see Karatzas 1988: 135).



at this unsuccessful attempt to communicate with readers is well known, as in other similar cases.<sup>4</sup>

If we place the novel in its socio-historical context, it is not difficult to understand the reasons that may have contributed to making it unappealing to readers. The year of the novel's publication, 1897, was a significant one for Greeks, and not for the happiest of reasons, as they had been defeated by the Ottoman forces in Thessaly in their efforts to unite those areas in Greece which were not yet liberated (as Crete) with the rest of the free Greek nation state. This defeat also resulted in having to cede to the Ottoman Empire a small piece of land on the border of Thessaly. This shattering of ambitions had an impact on Psycharis (his intense patriotism had already been declared in *To Taξίδι μου*), as well as on other Greek writers, for a long period after the event. The less than successful reception of *Τόνειρο* by contemporary readers may have been due to the unlucky timing of its publication. Its messages seemed too distant from readers' everyday experience at that time in Greece. Its preoccupation with the role of science, and of literature, was condemned to pass unnoticed, amid the general feelings of disillusionment. At the same time, in France, a major political scandal, the 'Dreyfus affair', was fragmenting social opinion.

In 1894, the Jewish officer Alfred Dreyfus had been accused and convicted of being a traitor and of passing state secrets to foreign powers. The affair was marked by acute anti-Semitism, which was prevalent in certain segments of French society. In 1897, the French newspapers published evidence indicating Dreyfus's innocence and incriminating another officer named Esterhazy. The events which followed had the

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<sup>4</sup>“Μπρέ αδερφέ! Φαντάσου κανείς να βγάλη την ψυχή του τέσσερα χρόνια για να καταφέρει τέτοιο βιβλίο και να μην το διάβασε κανένας Αθηναίος! Κανένας! Ίσως δηλαδή καμιά δεκαριά, πες είκοσι και τέλειωσε” (Karatzas 1988: 105).

effect of dividing the social and political scene in France into two ideological camps: on the one hand, those who were in favour of a review of the Dreyfus trial, progressive people such as Travieux, Pressensé and writers such as Zola and Psycharis, and on the other side, those who represented the conservative alliance (Kriaras 1981: 225-31).<sup>5</sup> It is easy to understand how in such a climate Psycharis's novel would have been of very little interest to readers in France. Indicative of Psycharis's response to the signs of the time, was the publication the following year of another novel in French, *La Croyante*, which aimed to convey the climate of the 'Dreyfus period', by questioning religious issues and moral values (Constandoulaki-Chantzou 1981: 195). Dreyfus was finally rehabilitated in 1906.

*Tóveipo* is, nevertheless, a representative example of a thesis novel/roman à thèse, written by an educated man of his era, driven by reformist ideals. Its ideology operates on many different levels, which at times intersect and overlap to communicate the main point, and which at other times take different directions in the narrative.<sup>6</sup> Psycharis conceived this novel with a plan in mind, to pose a pressing question. He wanted to explore how far ambition could drive a human soul: "Je me suis posé la question que voici: 'Quel est l'aboutissant (sic) dernier de l'ambition? Que veut-elle et que cherche-t-elle? [...]'. Et c'est à quoi j'ai tâché de répondre en dressant, autour de mon héros, tous les trophées imaginables" (Psychari 1898: iv). Yanniris is not only a characteristic type of ambitious and passionate young man, but is also the idea of ambition personified (ibid).

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<sup>5</sup>Psycharis records the climate of the trial and the ensuing upheaval in his correspondence. Significantly, the scene of Yanniris's reception by the crowds in Paris when he presents his social reforms is very similar to the real life event of reception and support from the people towards the 'Dreyfusards' during one major demonstration for the case (see also his letter of 1899 to Eftaliotis in *Nea Estia* 1954, 55 (644): 632 published by Stamatis Karatzas).

<sup>6</sup>My references to ideology do not mean political commentary but rather a set of ideas similar to a kind of vision either for the society to which they are directed or for literature.

Yanniris, the main character of the novel, is a self-made intellectual who manages not only to get a very good education in Paris but also to become a famous writer whose prolific output is always crowned with extraordinary success. His genius is such that he also conceives and preaches a new religion.<sup>7</sup> Some of the episodes of Yanniris's life refer directly to the real person behind the fiction and his work, the author Psycharis. The novel comprises two parts, with different settings and activities. The first presents Yanniris's life in Paris, the social circles he frequents and his acquaintances there. In the second, Yanniris is transposed to an island near Constantinople. Feeling overwhelmed by all the fame he has attained and by the intrigues of the Parisian circles, he decides to live on this island amongst the simple people he used to know in his childhood. However, during his stay, he comes into contact with characters who are not at all unlike those he associated with in Paris, with the same flaws and attitudes. He finds love there in the shape of 'Myrriana'. Although the two never consummate their love, they are nevertheless, vilified by locals because their relationship is inappropriate, Yanniris having been married in Paris to Versa. In terms of lifestyle, Yanniris achieves everything that he could wish for: he attains fame in Paris through his creative pursuits and finds love in Greece. The emotional fulfilment marks the end of his ambitions and of his more organised life in Paris.<sup>8</sup> The two parts of his life never come together, and as fate would have it, when his friends from Paris arrive unannounced on the island, dramatic natural events intervene to make the separation permanent. An earthquake destroys almost everything in the island, except the narrator of the story because as the narrative conventions require, he

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<sup>7</sup>There are clear parallels with the importance of science in this aspect.

<sup>8</sup>In that respect, the author suggests that the culmination of human ambition is to find love or that the driving force of ambition ends when there is love instead.

has to be saved in order to present Yanniris's tale.<sup>9</sup> Therefore the novel is structured around a bipolar scheme composed of the 'Paris period', representing creativity, logic and attainment of fame, and the 'Greek period', representing emotional fulfilment.<sup>10</sup>

The novel begins with the narration of a dream and the first sentence introduces the two main vehicles of the narrative process, as well as its object: "Ο Γιαννίρης πολλές φορές μου δηγήθηκε τόνειρό του και πάντα του άρεζε να μου το δηγάται" (Psycharis 1897: 5). The narrator and Yanniris himself will take it in turns to relate his story, which is the pursuit of a 'dream'. The first chapter of the novel, "Το παράθυρο" which opens a channel of communication with the readers, has an allegorical function in relation to the story of the narrative. The significance of the dream will be revealed gradually during the narration, although the heavy symbolism offers many clues as to what will happen: Yanniris's life, as will be revealed, will see the realisation of that dream. Thus the novel starts with a specific thesis, to prove that someone's life may be as he has dreamed of it being, if he only thinks and acts in a certain way. In order to achieve this, there are various stages and experiences which the main character has to go through, with many different people to meet and to interact with, allowing in the process, the narrator to convey his message.

As mentioned above, the French version is shorter, without too many repetitions, since according to the author's explanations in its prologue: "[en français]

<sup>9</sup>Psycharis mentioned in his *Για το Ρωμαίικο Θέατρο* (1901) that the account of the earthquake referred to a real incident that happened in Zakynthos in 1895 (1901: 82-83).

<sup>10</sup>These two poles: love and fame (glory), and the tensions they create in people's lives, are encountered in many of Psycharis's novels and non-literary texts: "Nos rêves de gloire et d'amour passeront-ils comme une ombre ou attesteront-ils un jour que nous avons été?" (Psychari 1884: 797), asks Psycharis in an earlier text which discusses most of the issues that will occupy him in his literary writing for the rest of his life. Furthermore, responding to an unfair review of his novel by a lawyer called George Apostolidis, the author explains that the writer of the review did not take into consideration the two main themes of the novel: "Κι όλο το ρομάντζο άλλο νόημα δεν έχει από την ψυχολογία της δόξας και της αγάπης, από τη σύγκριση που γίνεται ολοένα μεταξύ τα δυο τα μεγάλα τα ψυχόρμητα του κάθε ανθρώπου. Δεν το σημειώνει πουθενά ο κριτογράφος μας, επειδή δεν του συμφέρνει [...]" (Psycharis 1908: 62n).

nous ne supportons pas l'abondance" (Psichari 1898: xii). It focuses on presenting the typical 'Greek spirit' to a non-Greek readership, whereas the Greek text allocates equal analysis to both contexts, French and Greek (ibid: xii-xiii).<sup>11</sup> The novel in Greek, though, appears to be disjointed; it introduces various episodes and different lines of narrative, none of which are fully explored. Most of them remain open as far as narrative organisation is concerned, and perhaps their function is simply to paint a faithful portrait of the characters depicted, as there is an emphasis in this novel on presenting different characters.<sup>12</sup> The overlapping of the novel's ideological positions can be held responsible for some redundancy in the discourse, although the superfluity of the text overall serves other functions. It indicates that the author wishes to emphasise the content, 'the message' of his narrative, sometimes at the expense of its organisation. Therefore, particularly when examining the Greek text, it is more difficult to classify all of its ideological statements in a systematic way, because they are scattered throughout the text, literally in every utterance in the novel.

The ideology of the novel is the result of two major influences. On the one hand, there was the cosmopolitan upbringing and education of the author which made him well informed about the scientific advances of his era and of their emergence in literary writing; it also instilled in him the ideals of European culture regarding progress and education. On the other, Psicharis was aware of the situation of Greek society and the attempts in Greek literature to find a form of narrative, which would

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<sup>11</sup>In his prologue to the French edition, the author explained that he had attempted to make a sort of 'ethography', drawing a portrait of two or three representative Greek types, who exhibit the qualities of the race. Therefore, in this version he condenses the first part of the novel dealing with the French social circles of the period, since "il y a d'autres problèmes, dans le vaste monde, que ceux qui agitent le boulevard – ou les salons" (Psichari 1898: iii-xvi).

<sup>12</sup>An 'overpopulation' of characters in novels was noted in Victorian literature, demonstrating an affiliation with the currents in biology that examined abundance, variation and diversification in nature, which in turn, was reflected in the humanities, in the perception of the complexity of human life and relations (see Levine 1988: 18).

reflect its new cultural identity. The novel's ideology revolves around either general issues to do with science and 'truth' or the question of Greek identity. Moreover, in many cases, these two themes are associated with literature and its function. In particular, the question of 'truth' in relation to literature is significant in most of Psycharis's novels (see also Chapter Six). In the parts of the novel where the emphasis is on the act of writing, the novel's self-reflexivity overshadows the attempts to refer to things in the non-textual, physical world. There is, I believe, an extremely ambitious plan behind Psycharis's intentions regarding his novel. He conceived it both as a vehicle for disseminating truths in society, and for restoring the value of literature independent of other social and cultural manifestations. In that respect, it is not surprising that it did not achieve its intended success, being entrapped in its own multiple and sometimes conflicting directions.

One significant element of the novel, however, is its depiction of many different characters, whose psychology the author aims to convey faithfully: "[...] κοίταξε τόνειρο το ίδιο στην αρχή. Δεν έχει δράση; Δε φαίνεται του καθενός η ψυχή από το πορπάτημα, από το κούνημα του κεφαλιού, από κάθε λόγο;" explains the author in his correspondence (Karatzas 1988: 135). Apart from Yanniris, more than twenty different characters, main or secondary, appear in the novel and most of them are related to the activity of writing, with their own dreams and ambitions: poets, novelists, linguists, historians, journalists, publishers, all striving to make a name for themselves (see Sachinis 1971: 208). The author describes his environment, which inevitably influences him to perceive the world as full of writers. Even ordinary people on the island cite proverbs and demotic songs and collaborate with linguists who come to the island for research purposes (the island must be Prinkipo, close to Constantinople, also mentioned in the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*). Most of the characters



who represent intellectuals are connected with some aspect of Yanniris's versatile personality, reinforcing his superiority by their inadequacies. The major ideological focus of the novel is the discourse about science and evolution and this chapter will analyse how the pre-eminence of science is presented in the novel through discussion of two of its major strands, positivist and evolutionary theory.

### **1.The emergence of 'scientific' writing**

*Τόνειρο* closely follows the increasing interest in science in nineteenth-century Europe. This period saw science gain general acceptance, having escaped from its status as a branch of the occult and developed into a belief system as an alternative to religion (see Beer 1983, LeGouis 1997). Indeed, in a world where everything was undergoing transformation, and nothing seemed stable, people would look to science for answers concerning their existence, and try to organise their lives and their immediate environment into understandable structures. It is indicative that in 1888 Psycharis wrote in *To Ταξίδι μου*: “Ο άνθρωπος αλλάζει κι ο κόσμος αιώνια μεταμορφώνεται” (1993: 134). The advances in natural sciences, and especially the methodology of observation and taxonomy that was being used in biology, were perceived as a metaphor for understanding the world, offering a kind of reassurance about and control over the unknown. The natural scientists Jean Baptiste de Lamarck, Charles Lyell and Robert Chambers paved the way for Darwin's evolutionary ideas. Claude Bernard explored issues relating to the operation of medicine, and tried to systematise it theoretically in his text *Introduction à l'Étude de la Médecine Expérimentale* (1865).

In addition to the emphasis on biology, another school of thought developed, that of positivism. Positivism was inspired by the process of classification adopted in the natural sciences, and although not directly challenging religious beliefs, it suggested that knowledge about the world could be acquired only through specific epistemological approaches. Positivism flourished in the second half of the nineteenth century, systematised by Auguste Comte, as an attempt to apply the methodology of the natural sciences to explain social phenomena (Smith 1996: 14). “For Comte, positive science was a distinct third stage in the development of knowledge, which progressed first from theological to metaphysical knowledge and then to positivist knowledge” (ibid: 14). In literary studies, the principles of positivism were summed up in Hippolyte Taine’s *Introduction à l’Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*. A literary text, Taine argued, must be regarded as the expression of the psychology of the individual, which in its turn is the expression of the milieu and the period in which the individual lived, and of the race to which he belonged (see Taine 1880: 1-36, also Taine 1936, and Robinson 1978: 73). The basic aim of positivists in the literary context, was to combine science and literature, in order “to make the best literature more accessible to the common man and woman” (LeGouis 1997: 14). Although this statement seems ambiguous, it suggests that positivists understood their function as that of educating the public at large. Thus the belief in science and its connection with literature was supported by many thinkers, and was considered the most notable advance of the time.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>As we move away from this period, we can follow the divergence in the paths taken by these two areas of intellectual activity. Science becomes less literary and less comprehensible to the general public, relying on mathematical equations. Literature also becomes more problematic, reflecting a new unstable situation through its emphasis on multiple realities, abandoning the scientific approach both in terms of theme and of narration.

Psycharis considered himself a positivist and attempted faithfully to follow in his work, both linguistic and literary, a system. In his fiction this is apparent in the reworking of his texts and the importance he places on finding the correct expression which must be followed with consistency and on the dissemination of specific ideas. It is also significant that the form of the novels is almost always a noteworthy feature, which suggests that the author worked methodically. For example, in *Tóveipo*, there is symmetry between events and correspondences between people from one part of the novel, the French context, to the other, the Greek one. Furthermore, the titles of chapters are the same – in reverse order – from the first to the second part, further highlighting the importance of form. As a precursor of future tendencies, in addition to declaring the importance of science in real and fictional life, *Tóveipo* also includes elements of metafictional writing, which draw attention to the act of writing itself.

### 1.1. Science and fiction: the positivist model

Science, according to the OED (Oxford English Dictionary (vol. 14), is “the state or fact of knowing”; in philosophical terms, science is understood as ‘knowledge’ as opposed to ‘belief’ or ‘opinion’, with an emphasis on “the distinction to be drawn between theoretical perception of a truth and moral conviction” (1989: 648, no.1). Psycharis follows Ernest Renan’s definition of science, and thus he perceives it as contributing to all fields of knowledge.<sup>14</sup> According to this, there should not be any distinction between the natural sciences and the humanities, as they

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<sup>14</sup>..On sait qu’aujourd’hui, en parlant de sciences, on comprend aussi bien sous cette denomination les sciences historiques que les sciences de la nature. Le chimiste qui cherche à déterminer le corps le plus simple, le philosophe qui veut aller au plus profond de l’âme et de la raison, le philologue qui remonte au manuscrit le plus ancien et aux primitives racines des langues sœurs, obéissent au même principe d’analyse et d’investigation” (Psichari 1884: 794n).

follow the same methodology and contribute equally to knowledge. This is one of the ideological points, which will be addressed many times in the novel.

The author's aim in this novel was to describe human nature and what drives people to achieve their ambitions. He explores people's behaviour in two different contexts, French and Greek. Yanniris frequents social circles in the Parisian 'milieu' and mingles with the *haut monde*, where he is able to observe people closely and to note certain patterns of behaviour. He is also well received by them and respected as one of the intellectuals of his time. Analysing this life-style offers some insights which can then be confirmed if they exist in the second focus of his examination, the way of life on a remote Greek island. Thus Psycharis treats his fictional material as a case study, insisting on the theoretical aspect of his approach. Like many intellectuals of his time, he attempts to apply the methodology of the natural sciences (investigation and analysis) to literature, believing that literature should not be exempt from developments in other fields of human activity (Psichari 1884: 794). Palamas was also of the same opinion. It is significant that in his prologue to *Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου*, he praised Psycharis's article "La Science et les Destinées Nouvelles de la Poésie", for its accuracy, confirming that poets get inspiration from scientific advances (1960a: 298n, written in 1906).

An important part of the novel is the dialogue between Yanniris and the doctor, Palmis, about science. These characters represent aspects of the author's personality, as is the case with some of the main characters in his other novels; for example in *Αγνή* (1913), there is a similar exchange of ideas between Andreas, the writer, and Kamekos, the violinist (see Chapter Eight). The dialogue between Palmis and Yanniris, in this case, represents more specifically the connection between science and logical ordering, as opposed to imaginative thinking. As the author claimed in his

dedication of *Autour de la Grèce* (24 April 1895) to Louis Havet: “la science et la littérature ont toujours été les deux grands courants de l’intelligence humaine [...] dérivait d’un même principe, coulaient d’un même flot [...] les mêmes qualités d’imagination, de pénétration et d’analyse, de divination souvent, la même force de combinaison et, par conséquent, la même somme de travail sont nécessaires au savant comme au littérateur” (Psichari 1895a: v-vi). Palmis is working to locate the causes and understand the spread of tuberculosis. He meets Yanniris during both phases of Yanniris’s life, once in Paris and later, when traveling from Paris to the Greek island. Palmis does not relate to the other characters in the novel, nor does he have any function in the plot. He is carefully chosen to introduce the positivist ideology of the narrative and make the author’s beliefs clear. He explains that each new discovery will yield more possibilities, gradually providing more new information in every field of research. Referring to his research and its usefulness to future generations, he asserts with confidence: “nothing is ever lost, nor can it be lost” (46).<sup>15</sup> Palmis also suggests that science is analogous to a tower, indicating the importance of ideas in the gradual building of the whole, acknowledging the individual efforts of those who form the tower’s foundations:

Η επιστήμη, φίλε μου, είναι το μόνο αθάνατο πράγμα στον κόσμο. Ο άνθρωπος, τάτομο, μπορεί να πεθάνει, μπορεί μάλιστα και να ξεχαστεί όλους διόλου. Η ιδέα του όμως πάντα θα ζήσει, γιατί κι άλλη να φανή, θα της χρωστάει την ύπαρξή της, αφού η δέφτερη χωρίς την πρώτη δε θα φαινότανε ποτές. Η επιστήμη μοιάζει σαν πύργος που ανεβαίνει ψηλά ψηλά και που είναι βαθιά μέσα στο χώμα θεμελιωμένος· όσο υψώνεται, βυθίζονται τα θεμέλια λίγο λίγο και δεν τα βλέπεις· μα δε θάβλεπες και τον πύργο, αν έβλεπες τα θεμέλια. Κ’ έτσι ζούμε παντοτινά. Άφαντη κ’ αιώνια πέτρα είμαστε ο καθένας [...](46).

<sup>15</sup> All references to the novel are from the 1897 edition. The translations into English are mine.

Palmis's beliefs focus on the importance of work and the ordering of experience. The image of the tower is indicative of the positivist ideology, which can comprehend experience only in the terms of continuity. The character explains how the temporal ordering of experience is necessary in order to arrive at timeless, universal truths, the ultimate aim of scientists.

Then there is Yanniris, who has more imaginative qualities and successfully combines scientific with creative thinking. As the narrator of *Τόνειρο* explains, unlike the doctor, Yanniris conceives of science in an abstract way, attributing a mythical dimension to it in certain parts of the text:

Η επιστήμη, Γιαννίρη μου, σε φώναζε και σε τάραζε η φωνή της. Είναι σαν της ανεράιδας τη φωνή, σαν τραγούδι μαγεμένο που σε τραβά στη θάλασσα μέσα. Θάλασσα είναι κ' η επιστήμη, ένα χάος που χάνεσαι και μεθάς, γιατί βλέπεις πως ένα άτομο τίποτις δεν είναι και πως δουλέβεις μαζί με τους άλλους για παγκόσμιους σκοπούς, για να φανή καμιά μέρα η αλήθεια και να γίνη πράμα δικό μας (49).

However, this understanding is close to the positivist theory, which in its attempt to replace religious dogmas with verifiable causes, seemed to be moving towards a different type of mysticism (LeGouis 1997: 46). It is also significant that it includes an implicit critique of its own credo, because it suggests that the security that can be achieved by organisation is always desired but always elusive.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the very possibilities opened up by science can give rise to both optimistic and sceptical attitudes.

<sup>16</sup>The above comment resembles Mr. Brook's statement in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-2), when, having realised science's all-pervasive character, he expresses his disillusionment: "I went into science a great deal myself at one time; but I saw it would not do. It leads to everything, you can let nothing alone" (Eliot 1994: 17).



The conception of science as a direction with multiple possibilities is in accordance with the general notion of its contribution to human knowledge, which has no limits. At the same time, there is always the hope that there are hidden laws waiting to be discovered and deciphered, in order to obtain ‘truths’, as is pointed out in the above extract from the novel. A contradiction becomes apparent, then, within this metaphorical image, and the context which surrounds it: even though there is an awareness and acceptance of the ‘fictitious’ aspect that characterises the primary hypotheses and their discourse and therefore, the relative and indirect approximation to the material things described, there is also a deep-rooted desire for these abstractions to produce generalised laws, presenting truths about people and the world. In another one of Yanniris’s discussions with Palmis, the doctor states that in a way, science allows him to overcome the constraints of his nature, making him stronger even than death. He adds that, although he firmly believes that science leads somewhere, he does not know exactly how it can benefit people. He can only presume that it affects people’s lives in a beneficial way: “Πού πάει κι ως πού πάει, δεν έχω ιδέα. Μα κάπου πηγαίνει. Το έργο το αιώνιο το δικό μας, είναι η καλοσύνη” (247).

The three important notions in the narrative are science, truth and life, and the aim is to arrive at a full understanding of life through science.<sup>17</sup> The path leading from science to an understanding of life, however, involved going in two opposite directions: one way led towards mystery and expansion, and the other towards fixing and proving. The views discussed by the characters suggest the need to pass from one aspect (that of mystery), in order to arrive at the other (that of proof). When Yanniris

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<sup>17</sup>Psycharis had also expressed his belief in these ideological positions in his essay: “Réflexions sur la Science et la Morale: Une Parole de Socrate”, where he wrote: “connais ton âme et connais la planète où ton âme est née. Connais toute la réalité” (in Psichari 1895a: 27).

contemplates the role of science, he conceives of it as the source of life that entails the mystery of the indefinable:

Αλλιώς νοιώθουμε, αλλιώς συλλογιζόμαστε, αλλιώς ζούμε, άμα εκείνη το πη. [...] μας έδειξε αφτή [...] πως ό,τι έχει αναπνοή, έχει και μιαν αρχή, ένα αίμα και μια ψυχή. [...] Και δεν της μέλει της επιστήμης τι θα πουν και τι δε θα πουν, αν το έργο που θεμελιώνει θα γκρεμιστή, αν κατόπι θα το θυμούνται οι ανθρώποι, αφού το έργο της είναι η αλήθεια κ' η αλήθεια πάντα θα νικήση, γιατί η πρώτη αλήθεια είναι η ζωή (200-1).

When he occupies himself in a more specific way with science, he manages to make a discovery about a phenomenon on the surface of the moon, and this leads him to connect physical phenomena with human life in a more systematic way: “Άρχισε να συλλογιέται πως ανθρώποι και πλανήτες ακούν ένα νόμο, έχουνε μια τύχη, και πως η γις μας μια μέρα και κείνη θα τελειώση σαν το φεγγάρι [...]” (237). An indication that the laws of the universe rule human life is glimpsed in the destruction of the island by an earthquake, which mirrors the destruction on the moon predicted and observed by Yanniris.

Apart from Palmis and Yanniris, two other characters in the narrative also represent aspects of the author's own personality. They are linguists, who also constitute examples of the positivist approach. The narrator explains how they observe the way ordinary people talked, record their speech on the new phonographs, formulate hypotheses and suggest laws with general linguistic application – even though they do not agree with each other. The laws which are derived from this process have the status of truth, by which he means knowledge.<sup>18</sup> We see, therefore,

<sup>18</sup>The importance of these discoveries leads one linguist to challenge the other to a duel, as a result of their disagreement about their work – an episode from Psycharis's own life, when he challenged Chatzidakis to a duel, because the latter claimed that Psycharis had copied an essay from one of his students in exchange for money.

that the novel incorporates the positivist ideology in its discourse, and in the choice of characters, who represent specific examples of *hommes savants*.<sup>19</sup>

Yanniris is the most perceptive character of all, incorporating all the qualities of an enlightened person, and is able to make a connection between science and love, viewing science as a positive energy, “καλοσύνη”, which embraces all mankind. During a lecture in Paris, a sociological analysis entitled “Love and Science”, Yanniris refers to the mysteries of nature which are reflected in the human psyche, and explains how the evolution that takes place in the physical world corresponds to the energy which is love and with which people could shape their futures: Yanniris’s dream is to attain glory, but this dream is associated with the improvement of the world that can be achieved through the insights of science, as the latter helps understand how the world functions, and how to progress. Therefore, science is viewed by the characters in the narrative as encompassing glory for the scientist and love in its wider form, since in accordance with the ideals of the Enlightenment, it aspires to improve people’s lives. In this respect, the two aspirations of the main character, glory and love, are not so much in competition, as working jointly to create the ideology of the novel. The improvement of people’s lives, the warming of their hearts, the reassurance people require, are all expressions of unconditional love, as preached within the domain of religion:

Δώσε δυο παράδες του φτωχού· δώσε έναν καλό λόγο του δούλου σου που δεν τον προσμένει· γιάτρεβε, όσο γίνεται, τις ψυχές. Ο λόγος σου ο καλός και το καλό σου φέρσιμο θα μπούνε μέσα στη μέση της καρδιάς του καθενός· [...] η καλοσύνη σου η μικρή θα μείνει παντοτεινά (248).

<sup>19</sup>The term implied scientific as well as literary achievement, and it was applied to writers such as Zola, Bourget and Barrès in French culture (LeGouis 1997: 43).

Yanniris believes that in order to fulfill his ambitions, he must preach a new religion; he believes that every new school of thought, which aspires to make a difference in the world, must follow the guiding principles of a religious system: “Κοίταξε θρησκεία να στήσης ή να χαλάσης, και τότες άλλαξες τον κόσμο” (198). Therefore, the new ‘religion’ of positivism shared by the author and his characters leaves its mark on the discourse of the novel: “για τον άνθρωπο δουλέβω και γω και θα δουλέψω ίσια με το ξεψύχημά μου [...]” (242), explains Palmis.

## 1.2 The organic model and evolutionary theory

In 1859 Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. This work presented the whole case for the theory of evolution and caused an instant sensation among the general public, and more especially the scientific community (Howard 2001: 9). Darwin’s theory proposed that organisms tend to vary, even though only slightly, and that these variations tend to be inherited. The overproduction of organisms is controlled by a mechanism of selection, introduced by nature to ensure the survival of the fittest, and unlimited adaptive changes were made from one generation to the next (Darwin 1859: 81 & Howard 2001: 36, see also Bateson 1910: 85-101). Even though the evolutionary theory, at the time of its publication, was still a speculative argument, it became influential as an explanatory device for a changing world, diverging from hitherto imposed theological limitations. Darwin’s evolutionary theory also “brought together two imaginative elements implicit in much nineteenth-century thinking [...] the fascination with growth, and with transformation” (Beer 1983: 107). A common image of the theory, the tree-like arrangement, which symbolises the various stages of life (*Arbor Vitae*) or the various stages of knowledge

(*Arbor Scientiae*), was used to represent the connections existing between all beings, since the concept of growth exemplified in the tree and its branches corresponded to the evolutionary process. Furthermore, in nineteenth-century romantic thinking an equivalence was claimed between creative imagination and natural order, the latter represented by the process of growth (Beer 1983: 108). I would like to suggest that *Psycharis* thematises some of the intrinsic elements of the evolutionary theory in this novel: there are analogies between the model of growth and the production of ideas, we may also identify the main evolutionary principles: the cycle of life, the web of relations between human beings, the competition for the survival of the fittest and the sexual selection which secures the continuation of a specific group.

Organic continuity, as in the metaphor of a tree and its branches or of an orchard with many fruit-bearing trees, finds expression in many of the novel's ideas. The process of creative thinking is compared metaphorically with the growth of a tree up to the point of blossoming, alluding to the completion and perfection of an idea. Yanniris's ideas, for example, develop and take shape as trees do, and this 'orchard' of ideas becomes accessible to all those who may wish to profit from it: "Ταναγνώσματά του εκείνα είχαν ένα είδος περιβόλι· φύτεψε μέσα όλα του τα δέντρα, έβαλε τις ιδέες του όλες· μα είχαν τα δέντρα πολλά και δεν καλοφαίνονταν το καθένα· έπειτα, άλλα μικρούτσικα ακόμη, άλλα γεμάτα κλαδιά και φουντωτά [...]"(91). This image suggests metaphorically the branching out of writers of fiction like Yanniris towards interesting new fields.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, the creation of ideas is important in the novel and the interdependence of ideas on other elements is emphasised: "Η ιδέα του όμως πάντα θα ζήσει, γιατί κι άλλη να φανή, θα της χρωστάη

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<sup>20</sup>The implication is that, in a self-referential manner, Yanniris mirrors the activities of the real-life author, *Psycharis*, who is his creator.

την ύπαρξή της, αφού η δέφτερη χωρίς την πρώτη δε θα φαινότανε ποτές” (46). The metaphor associating the tree with an ‘idea’ introduces something specific in the place of something abstract, something which grows as opposed to something which exists or is found (Tziovas 1986: 68); this is exactly the theoretical basis of evolutionary theory which challenged the earlier fundamental concepts which had been imposed by religion and which could not be proven true or false, replacing them with something more quantifiable. Thus, in a direct parallel with the model of growth, it is suggested that the workings of a creative mind can be understood as a natural phenomenon.

Similarly, sometimes, material and ideological progress are compared in order to stress the connection promoted in the narrative between abstract ideas and specific natural entities. When Printas, one of the characters whom Yanniris meets in Paris, suggests new methods of cultivation in mountainous areas for the benefit of poor people, the way in which sowing and production of new crops is discussed between characters alludes metaphorically to the fertile exploitation of ideas: “[...] πρέπει να φέρουμε κ’ ένα δυό σπόρους στο βουνό, να σπείρουμε, να σκάψουμε, να φυτέψουμε στου βουνού τα πλάγια, ο τόπος να καλλιεργηθή [...]” (134). In this passage, Printas’s ideas find fanatical support despite the fact that the soil in the mountains does not stand much chance of bearing fruit, and this is because his arguments are so convincing that people believe they are true. As is explained elsewhere by the narrator: “[ο] σπόρος γυρέβει να φυτρώση, το κουκκούτσι να γίνη φρούττο, το λουλούδι να ξανοίξη. Η δική μας η φιλοδοξία τέτοια είναι: πανταχού θα την έβρης και στην πλάση την ίδια” (245).

Love too, an ideal, abstract concept, follows this evolutionary pattern in the novel, when it is compared with a flower, something beautiful but destined to die.



Yanniris's and Myrriana's love, though idealised, forms part of the evolutionary discourse, which reveals the powers of life:

Τι θέλει, τι γυρέβει το καημένο το λουλούδι; Τι πόθο και τι σκοπό λες νάχη σαν ξανοίγει; Κανένα σκοπό και πόθο κανένα, κανένα παρά μόνο να ξανοίξη, να ζήσει, να μαραθή. Για τίποτες άλλο μην το ρωτήξης το φτωχό· δεν ξέρει να σου πη. Δεν ήξερε άλλο κ' η Μυρριάνα· αφτός είταν ο προορισμός της· αφτός είναι της αγάπης ο προορισμός (379).

The various parts of a tree, which symbolise either the various stages of life or the various branches of knowledge, are all equally important in the formation of the whole. The miracle of life can be witnessed in everything in nature. Accordingly, it is explained that everything and everyone in the world is part of a process of generation and degeneration, and nothing happens for which nature cannot offer a suitable explanation. As Yanniris points out, referring to science: “[...] μας έδειξε αφτή πως και τα ζώα, τα σκυλιά και τα μερμήγκια είναι αδέρφια μας και πως ό,τι έχει αναπνοή, έχει και μιαν αρχή, ένα αίμα και μια ψυχή” (201).

The tree image, suggesting the affinities between all beings, is also part of the narrative organisation, because the author's aim was to portray human nature with all its competitiveness in two different contexts. Even though the environment and the situation change between the first and second parts of the novel, the author portrays almost the same characters in both sections, suggesting affinities which are deeper than mere accidents. The quasi-anagrammatic names chosen for the characters in the two parts reinforce the impression that we are reading stories about the same people: Cholvos is turned into Volchos in the second part, Ralivas into Livaris, Chumos into Churos, Printas into Tapris, and so on. There are a few authentic characters and these are the simple people of the island, who look after Yanniris during his stay there:

Stamatis, Eftalula, Morfo. These characters introduce the beautiful folk songs, which are the true manifestations of the authentic Greek soul.

In the plot, too, there is a web of connections between characters, which throws light on the various episodes in the novel. This web of connections exists in both parts of the novel; in the first, on a reduced scale, when Psycharis presents the social circles in Paris, but more particularly in the second part of the novel. In the latter the author describes in fine detail those associations which involve a system of thoughts, desires and actions concerning every character. Due to their interdependence they all have to modify their plans to some extent, and these minor alterations change the outcome of the story. The point is to make clear the similarities and differences between Greek and French people. For example, the Greek context favours sociability between people, unlike the French one, which is characterised by a sense of distance and alienation, at least as perceived by Yanniris: “[γ]ύρισε σπίτι του, όχι όμως μόνος. Έκαμε στις Βέρσας έναν καινούριο φίλο. Έμαθαν πως κάθονται στο ίδιο σπίτι κ’ οι δύο τους. Και να μην το ξέρουν!” (45).<sup>21</sup> In striking contrast, in the second part of the novel, everyone on the island is involved in everyone else’s affairs: “Κάθονταν ο ένας στο παράθυρό του και κοίταζε τη μια στο παράθυρό της [...]” (268). Furthermore, in the second part, Marika’s decision to marry Thanassis leads her to form a plan according to which, in order to force him to propose to her, she will have to make him jealous of somebody else’s success in love. For this reason, Marika tries to find a suitable fiancé for the elegant Myrriana who is loved by Yanniris. Marika’s efforts in this respect and her conversations with Myrriana will affect the latter’s relationship with Yanniris, as well as the life of Myrriana’s aunt, who is desperate to

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<sup>21</sup>These sort of differences will be pointed up again in the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1910-1), this time between the Swiss and the Constantinopolitan Greeks.

avoid becoming the centre of attention or controversy by association. When Myrriana declines the offer of a match, she and her aunt have to face the wrath of Marika and of her mother Saveraina. Gradually, they all have to modify their behaviour and their plans, to a greater or lesser extent in order to restore the equilibrium which had previously existed, and these changes affect the fate of the minor characters in the story as well. The narrative employs metaphors to describe the functioning of human relations in terms of relationships encountered in nature. When Marika tries to link Myrriana with Volchos for her own ends, the narrator presents the failure of this relationship as a problem which could never be solved, since the two belong to different trees: “Του ερχότανε σαν ξένο, σαν άλλου κόσμου πράμα· το έννοιωθε και κείνος πως δεν είταν οι δυό τους ενός δέντρου κλαριά” (309).

One of the aims of the novel is to define the ‘Greek character’. This can best be illustrated through its counter-example, the European, and more specifically the French character. In the author’s opinion there are two elements which distinguish Greek people from other Europeans: their intense competitiveness and the lack of method in any work they undertake. The narrator explains that Europeans, and especially those people linked by a Latin culture, are driven primarily by an ambition to conquer and to achieve material success, whereas the Greeks are driven by strong passions to achieve a glory similar to that of their ancestors, and, on a personal scale, to become more important than their neighbour. In other words, renown for Europeans is won by mastery over things, while renown for Greeks is won by supremacy over people. This is why the web of interrelationships works better in the second part of the novel, which involves the ‘Greek characters’. The progress in life towards which French people are striving exemplifies something of the scientific programme

discussed earlier. The French are practical in their outlook, working methodically, overcoming problems gradually and reaching specific goals:

Κ' έτσι περιτριγύρισαν τον κόσμο οι Ρωμαίοι και τον έκαμαν όλονα δικό τους. Και δοξάστηκαν, το κάτου κάτου, όσο και σείς. Και σήμερις ακόμη, για τούτο μας βλέπεις εμάς τους Φράγκους πολύ πιο πραχτικούς, πολύ πιο πιδέξιους από σας· μ' αυτόνα τον τρόπο χτίζουμε βασιλεία κ' έχουμε και παράδες. Δε γυρέβουμε πράματα που να είναι πέρα από τη δύναμή μας, δεν κυνηγούμε τη δόξα και καλά· νοιώθουμε τι αξίζει κάθε δουλειά και κάθε νίκη (245).

The Greeks, by contrast, compete more fervently among themselves, even over issues which are not important, and as Yanniris observes when he visits the island, they lack the practical qualities of French scientisme. They do not work methodically, but want to achieve everything at once and are not satisfied unless they do so. In this respect, they allow their emotions to interfere with and suppress the objectivity and patience work requires. As is pointed out in the narrative:

Οι προγόνου σου έβγαλαν όνομα κάμποσο – το μολογώ· – κοίταξε όμως πως κλαίει ο ένας, άμα ο άλλος τον ξεπεράση· δεν έχει πια ησυχία. [...] Εσείς ζουλέβεστε αναμεταξύ σας· με τον πόθο σας τον τρομερό να φανήτε, να σας καμαρώση ο κόσμος, βέβαια κάτι καταφέρατε και σας χρωστούμε την ιστορία, που εσείς την πρωτογράψατε – και γιατί, παρακαλώ; για να μην ξεχαστούνε τα λαμπρά σας τα κατορθώματα· σας χρωστούμε τη φιλοσοφία· και γιατί πάλε; γιατί μάλλωναν οι φιλοσόφοι σας αδιάκοπα [...] (244).

The author's optimism is expressed in his belief that the idiosyncratic characteristics of the race, which often seem to create problems, could in time, turn into positive qualities since the Greek hereditary line suggested the potential for progress: “Και για τούτο λέω πως από τη σημερινή ανακρίβεια μπορεί κατόπι να ξεφυτρώση κανένα καινούριο μεγαλείο, και πως το λάττωμα που τώρα φαίνεται μονάχο, ίσως μέσα του

κρύβει και μιαν αρετή” (13, the emphasis as it is in the text).<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this progress could be secured only through hard, methodical work. Thus the author-narrator presents his belief in the progress of the Greek people, in accordance with their past, and despite the attitudes that predominated at the time, of jealousy, competitiveness, and a tendency to overlook important issues.

The sexual drive and selection discussed in Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (1871), reflected the relationship between evolutionary theory, and the social and psychological theories, which were also gaining currency at the time (Beer 1983: 210). Sexual selection suggested an added element in the evolutionary process, one that was not imposed by nature, but which was voluntarily sought by the species. In *Τόπειρο*, one could argue that the author inverts Darwin’s belief that the human male has the power of choice (ibid: 211), presenting women, competing with their sophisticated intrigues for the love of men, as the powerful sex instead. In Paris, for example, Versa and Liana compete for Yanniris’s love and attention, and Versa succeeds in sending Liana away and marrying Yanniris herself, basing their union on their common ambition. In the second part of the novel, Myrriana competes in her own way with the absent Versa in order to win Yanniris, and the narrative suggests that this time the union between Yanniris and Myrriana is based on love. Marika and her friend Chryssoula also openly compete for Thanassis’ attention. What becomes clear is that, in both cases, the female will choose the stronger of the partners available to them, and this point is in line with Darwin’s theories on the behaviour of species in relation

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<sup>22</sup>It is worth noting that the words selected to express these beliefs, ‘ξεφυντρώση’, ‘κρύβει’, direct us to the organic model, which, as its representative image of the tree indicates, possesses visible, and invisible parts (the roots).

to sexual selection.<sup>23</sup> This selection helps both the individual and the community to survive and is part of the competition between species which ensures the survival of the fittest.

The novel also presents the rivalry between men who work in the same field, the same 'niche' for professional achievement and recognition. Volchos, for example, competes with the anonymous Athenian linguist, and Yanniris thinks of competing with the anonymous writer who is supposed to succeed him in Paris, while Thanassis competes with Antonis, the cashier from his office. Even though the narrative favours the 'fittest' in each pair every time, ultimately the natural order manifested in the earthquake destroys all these relationships and makes the conflicts seem meaningless. The author, however, manages in the meantime to convey some information about the Greek personality, and how it contrasts with the French character, suggesting perhaps that, in Darwin's words, "transmitted qualities make specific the character of diverse cultures and races" (ibid: 211).

## **2. Literature, science and didacticism**

Literary texts which aimed to make scientific ideas accessible to the general public mirrored in their plots the scientific linear model and discussed the current scientific tenets of their period explicitly. As Psycharis claims in his essay "*La Science et les Destinées Nouvelles de la Poésie*", the poets of his time were looking for inspiration in new discoveries, since poetry is always the daughter of its time: "Chacune des sciences qui ont rajeuni notre intelligence provoque des méditations

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<sup>23</sup>Yanniris for example, is a famous writer, unlike Cholvos, who competes for the same women in Paris, but who is presented as a mediocre writer. Similarly, Thanassis becomes more desirable than his friends in Marika's eyes, when he gains financial security.



poétiques nouvelles” (1884: 795).<sup>24</sup> And, indeed, as he explains, “il serait difficile, en vérité, d’énumérer toutes les voies que la science s’ouvre à l’inspiration. Le champ de nos connaissances est infini [...]” (794). Science opens up possibilities which enrich literature, and gives fresh meaning to the combination of instruction and pleasure, which had for a long time been considered the aim of literature.

In the discussions between characters in *Τόνειρο*, it is suggested that the qualities of imagination necessary for the creation of fictional works are also indispensable for the promotion of scientific advances. There are two interrelated concepts with implications for this narrative and for literature in general. The first considers science as fiction, in that it promotes investigation generated by the imagination: “Να, πάρε και τους σοφούς, τους μαθηματικούς, τους αστρονόμους, ένα Νιούτωνα κ’ έναν Γκαλιλαίο· τι θα μπορούσαν αφοί να κάμουνε μοναχοί τους, δίχως τα γράμματα, δίχως την ποίηση που προτού νάρθουνε μας γέννησε την ψυχή μας [...]” (36-7). Again, in the second part of the novel, we find the same belief: “Στην αρχή, ο ποιητής ξύπνησε τον κόσμο, του χρωστά ως κι ο σοφός τους πρώτους λογισμούς του, και σήμερις ακόμη με το στόμα του θα λαλήση κ’ η επιστήμη” (202). The other interpretation conceives of fiction as science, as the application of scientific principles. As a result fiction becomes more important, gaining the status of a carrier of truths: “Αντίς να θεμελιώση πύργους, έλεγε αφτός ιδέες να θεμελιώση· επειδής όμως τίποτα δίχως την επιστήμη κι όξω από την επιστήμη δε γίνεται, ως κ’ οι ιδέες του από τα τότες πήραν αίμα και σάρκα που δεν είχανε πρώτα” (51).

Science attempts to organise the world in structures, by pointing out new possibilities, and literature attempts to popularise these by helping us to understand the new ‘meanings’ through the mediation of instruction. Indeed, during periods of

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<sup>24</sup>By poetry, we should understand literature in general, in accordance with the definitions of the period.

change, didacticism tends to prevail in social and cultural manifestations, uniting these two areas of human activity, science and literature. In the narrative, both science and literature share the same status and compete to present truths and educate people. Thus the didactic element in literature corresponds with the theory put forward by the narrator about what is considered a successful artistic expression (a play to be precise):

Κ' έτσι, σα θυμούσουν κατόπι την παράσταση, έβγαινε και νόημα και φιλοσοφία, που δε γύρεβε ο Γιαννίρης με το στανιό να σε κατηχήση, κι όμως μοναχός σου έμπαινες σε σκέψη κ' έπαιρνες χαμπάρι πως κάτι τρέχει, δηλαδή πως ο ποιητής δεν κατάφερε μόνο και μόνο να σε κάμη να γελάσης, μα πως είχε την ιδέα του και την καταλάβαινες τώρα, αφού όσα θωρούσες στη σκηνή είταν τα καθημερινά μας, είταν η αλήθεια [...] (151).<sup>25</sup>

The narrator of the novel is very anxious to promote his views, and he excitedly proposes a type of 'ideological transfusion': "Αχ! να μπορούσε κανείς να τους έχη όλους, όλους τους ανθρώπους μαζωμένους σ' ένα μέρος και να τους σπρώχνη και να τους μπήχνη στον εγκέφαλο τις ιδέες του μια μια! Θα είταν αριστούργημα" (61). The desire to transmit one's ideas to other people finds its most suitable outlet in literature, which is viewed as a vehicle for all types of communication between author and readers, and between readers themselves through the text. For this reason, the author views literature as a suitable medium for the popularisation of contemporary scientific advances.

<sup>25</sup>The insistence on the truth of its discourse is characteristic of the roman à these, which aims to educate readers and promote its own moral views.

## Conclusion

With its carefully thought out plans for reforming Greek society and culture, Psycharis's methodological approach to his work is characteristic of his participation in the intellectual climate of the period. His novel is written with a specific thesis and specific aims: to suggest the importance of science, and to propose that the creative work could be viewed on an equal footing with scientific endeavour. Its most noticeable weaknesses, repetitions and minor episodes which function as obvious examples of the author's views, reveal the intensity with which the latter are promulgated at the expense of the readers' pleasure. Psycharis considers it only natural for other people to be part of his vision and to work together with him to accomplish a common dream. That is why he points out that he aimed to create a "[ρ]ομάντζο μοναδικό, από τα σπάνια εκείνα που αλήθεια κάτι κάνουν, κάτι κατορθώνουν, αλλάζουν τον άνθρωπο" (167) – indicating the self-referential aspect of the text. Though it is open to discussion whether or not he achieves this aim, *Tónειρο* certainly functions as a product of its time, exemplifying all the tendencies and new approaches which were shaping literature. To conclude, the aims of the novel are summed up in Palmis's legacy to future generations, which refers equally to fictional writing, and to his own scientific efforts: "Παίρνω χαρτί και κρατώ σημείωση. Όσα σημειώνω μαζώνονται και δε χάνονται πια μήτε μπορεί να χαθούνε" (46).

## CHAPTER FIVE

**ΖΩΗ ΚΙ ΑΓΑΠΗ ΣΤΗ ΜΟΝΑΞΙΑ, ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΑ ΕΝΟΣ  
ΚΑΙΝΟΥΡΡΙΟΥ ΡΟΜΠΙΝΣΩΝΑ: A NOVEL WITH A  
DOUBLE THESIS**

### 1. The plot and the author's sources

*Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904) is one of the two novels that Psycharis wrote in both Greek and French, the other one being *Τόνπειρο του Γιαννίρη*. To some extent, *Ζωή κι Αγάπη* is a case study for the theoretical principles that were presented to readers in *Τόνπειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897) and the views of its author are an extension of those expressed in the earlier novel.<sup>1</sup> The didacticism of the novel revolves mainly around the moral issue of the type of existence that an individual can lead in and out of social context, and questions of identity viewed through the prism of the division between the 'self' and 'others'. The main character and his behaviour are analysed in the light of the dominant theories of the period.

Psycharis worked painstakingly on this novel. There are three different manuscript versions in Benaki library: ms. no. 3893 (first part dated 1902 and a second part dated 1902-1904) with various notes and corrections, some written in pencil, and information regarding Lent which was related to the author by Argyris Eftaliotis; ms. no. 7538 (dated 1902-1904) which contains chapters A' to I' (1 to 10), and a second part (διορθωμένο B') which contains chapters IA' (11) to end of the novel; finally a third draft of the novel is a type-written document with some handwritten corrections also numbered 7538 and dated 1904. The first version (of ms. 3893) was serialised in *Noumas* in 1904 (16 May to 5 September, issues numbered 96

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<sup>1</sup>Another connection between these novels is the choice of similar names for the two main characters, Yanniris and Myrriana in *Τόνπειρο*, Yannis and Myriella in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*.

to 112). The second, reworked version of the novel (ms. 7538, and typewritten draft 7538) produced the 1904 edition by Estia (see Tomadakis 1991: 22).

The novel was favourably received by Greek critics, as was the case with *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*. Elias Voutieridis made positive comments, claiming that like Stendhal Psycharis placed an emphasis on analytical psychology and wanted to achieve the impression of an all-round character (1904: 6). Palamas praised it in his correspondence with Psycharis for its lively narration and the originality of the language (Palamas 1975: 96, written in 1905). Psycharis was very proud for the reception of this novel, and he refers to some of the favourable reviews in his letters to Eftaliotis (Karatzas 1988: 550-51); he even includes one of the French reviews in the beginning of the French text of 1922 (*Le Solitaire du Pacifique*). This was written by the author J.H. Rosny Sr., and makes a nice pun with the title of the novel. The author explains: “J’ai dévoré le ‘Solitaire du Pacifique’. C’est une évasion dans la nature, dans la vie primitive. Il y a des passages délicieux, de la poésie, de l’intérêt (l’intérêt, d’ailleurs, ne languit pas). Enfin, c’est un de ces livres avec les quels on vit [...]” (the emphasis as it is in the text). Yannis Chatzinis characterised *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* as “δείγμα σπάνιας ψυχολογικής πείρας και εξονυχιστικής παρατήρησης” (1943: 43). In a similar tone, Apostolos Sachinis praised the psychological analysis and the description of the setting (1958: 231-32). Rather more reserved comments came from Alkis Thrylos, who also pointed out the faults in the narration: too many digressions and suggestions that emphasise the author’s views and distract readers from the plot (1963: 267). Of all of the reviews of the novel, the most caustic one was written by Xenopoulos in *Panathinaia* in 1905; this review was particularly abrasive with regard to the language of the novel and must have angered Psycharis, who had paid considerable attention to this aspect: “[...] Και όλ’ αυτά, εις μίαν γλώσσαν, – ω

Θεέ μου, τι γλώσσα! – που είτε ψυχαριστής είσθε, είτε δημοτικιστής, είτε αρχαϊστής, είτε συμβιβαστικός και μισόγλωσσος, πρέπει να την μεταφράζετε με πολύν κόπον εις την ρωμαϊκην γλώσσαν, δια να βγάξετε νόημα ή και να μη βγάξετε διόλου! [...]” (vol. Θ’: 375-6, cited also in Psycharis 1906b: 289, together with his response to these remarks, and in Psycharis 1991: 40-41). However, apart from this very negative review, Psycharis’s novel was undoubtedly praised overall and was accepted – if not with enthusiasm – at least with approval by literary circles in Greece and in France (for more reviews see also *ibid*: 38-42 & notes).

*Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* is set in the years 1725 to 1750, a few years after the publication of *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and almost a century after the period to which the latter refers.<sup>2</sup> The author of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη* refers directly to Defoe’s novel, acknowledging it as the inspiration for this work. However, even though both Defoe and Psycharis use the same theme of the castaway in their novels, Psycharis aspires to promulgate different views from those expressed in Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. To this extent Psycharis’s novel is also a critique of Defoe’s novel, and has accordingly to promote a double thesis.

From the very beginning of the novel, Yannis Petroyannis, the main character of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, appears to be an appropriate subject for a Naturalistic study because he possesses a character defect which has led him to turn to drink, and an unfortunate family situation, having grown up without his parents. Psycharis must have been influenced by the movement of Naturalism that prevailed in the European literature in the last decades of nineteenth century. This becomes apparent from the objectives of the narrative, which are conveyed both in the text itself and in the

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<sup>2</sup>Defoe’s novel begins with Robinson Crusoe’s first-person narration of his life, stating: “I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho’ not of that country, my father being a foreigner of *Bremen*, who settled first at Hull [...]” (2001: 5).



afterword. It is therefore important to discuss how the Naturalistic movement was developed in literature.

Naturalism is a mode of writing which attempts to represent human nature faithfully and in particular the baser human instincts. There are specific elements which define a novel as naturalistic, but overall the idea is to create fiction in the manner of scientific writing. As is generally accepted, “[the ideology of naturalism] was influenced by the philosophy of positivism and its later corollary, the notion of determinism and by the development and popularisation of the scientific method [...]” (Berg-Martin 1992: 9). Naturalism was the name given to Émile Zola’s literary theory which followed from Taine’s determinism; the four principal components of the theory were heredity, milieu, historical moment and experimentation (Furst & Skrine 1971: 18). Zola suggested that humans, and by extension characters in literature, are subject to the forces of their heredity, the environment in which they are placed and a particular moment in history that puts its mark on them, or a set of circumstances that propel them to certain actions that are usually destructive. The element of experimentation referred to the technique of literary writing, and it suggested that the author should initially observe methodically and then set up an experiment to verify his/her hypothesis. Zola based his theory to a large extent on the principles of Claude Bernard’s *Introduction à l’Étude de la Médecine Expérimentale*, and claimed that:

[...] le romancier est fait d’un observateur et d’un expérimentateur. L’observateur chez lui donne les faits tels qu’ils les a observés, pose le point de départ, établit le terrain solide sur lequel vont marcher les personnages et se développer les phénomènes. Puis, l’expérimentateur paraît et institue l’expérience, [...] fait mouvoir les personnages dans une histoire particulière, pour y montrer que la succession des faits y sera telle que l’exige le déterminisme des phénomènes mis à l’étude” (Zola 1971: 63-64, written in 1880).

In *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* also, Psycharis sets his main character in a specific environment, examines and presents his progress to readers in detail with the object of verifying the hypothesis with which he started the narrative: that man is fundamentally a social being and cannot live alone. The hypothesis is based on Aristotle's philosophical views which are expressed in his *Politics* and in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, as to the nature of man as a bio-social being (see Dictionary of the History of Ideas 1973 II: 377). In presenting the adventures and finally the salvation of the main character, Psycharis also discusses other issues relevant to man's social existence, such as the importance of language for communication and the role of religion. The plot follows the theme of the castaway in Defoe's novel, but taken to extremes, by examining the fate of an individual in conditions of complete isolation.

Yannis Petroyannis is a sailor from Naxos, a rather unsociable person with a drinking habit. On one voyage, while acting as steersman of the ship, he gets drunk and falls asleep. When the captain finds out the danger they had faced because of Yannis's reckless behaviour, he decides to punish him in an unusual way. He wants to teach him a lesson regarding his responsibility towards other people. The ship is sailing the Pacific Ocean and the captain decides to leave Yannis, a young man of twenty-two, for a couple of years on the isolated island of Santa Clara – one of the Eastern Pacific islands in the Juan Fernandez archipelago – with the intention of picking him up afterwards, once he has learned his lesson. Yannis accepts his punishment with some relief at first, as the narrator explains that he did not like the company of other people very much and preferred to be alone. Furthermore, although the island appeared uninhabited, it was very beautiful at first sight, with its vegetation and blue coasts, and it made a positive impression on him. The pleasure provoked by the scenery, though, turned to terror once Yannis realised that the island was

completely deserted. It was then that he sensed for the first time his absolute and irrevocable isolation. What had appeared to start as something positive, freedom from duties, was in reality something very negative, as being deprived of human company led to the destruction of his human nature. The narrator reveals to readers how Yannis copes in this isolation.

At first, Yannis talks to himself, and converses with his old shipmates in his imagination, but gradually he forgets how to speak because he does not need to converse with anyone. Even though he makes an effort to keep an account of the days he spends on the island by remembering, for example, to observe Greek Easter by fasting for forty days, the loneliness gradually eats away at him and he becomes paranoid and delusional.<sup>3</sup> During this time of intense emotions and disturbed thoughts, Yannis sets the woods of the island on fire. Fortunately, the huge flames reveal to him the neighbouring island of Mas-a-Tierra, where he notices some movement. Coming to the conclusion that there could be some animals on that island, he decides to go there, as an escape from absolute solitude. In the meantime, it is revealed that Yannis's ship had come back to pick him up but had sunk. When some of the wood from the shipwreck comes ashore and Yannis sees his own name carved on one piece, he realises that he has lost his chance of escaping from the island. This realisation makes him even more determined to try and find some company, and after a few

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<sup>3</sup>Detailed descriptions of Orthodox customs appear in both the Greek and the French texts. Although this information is understandable in the French text which addresses a different readership, it is not expected in the Greek text because for the Greek reader, it is redundant. Perhaps the intention is to point out that the Greek Church functions as a community. The narrator also finds the opportunity, in this part of the narrative, to criticise Defoe's novel indirectly for its preoccupation with religion and in particular for the passages that refer to the indoctrination of Friday by Robinson Crusoe. By contrast, readers are informed that the Greek character is neither a theologian, nor a philosopher, just an ordinary man trying to keep the traditions with which he grew up, even in the adverse circumstances he faced: "[...] Να του σηκώσης το Πάσκα του, θα του σηκώσης και τη θρησκεία του. Αμέ βέβαια! Κ' ίδια η θρησκεία σου το θέλει, σ' όλους τους τόπους του κόσμου, να είσαι μαζί με τους άλλους, με τους συντρόφους σου [...]" (Psycharis 1991: 125).

months he manages to build a type of raft from the wood of an orange tree, and sets off with the hope of reaching Mas-a-Tierra.

On Mas-a-Tierra, he starts afresh with new ideas for his everyday survival. In an attempt to create a different existence there, he organises a type of community with the wild animals. As he had hoped, he finds some wild goats and dogs which he tries to tame. His efforts bear fruit and he finds himself in charge of a community, where he eats, sleeps, and communicates with the animals. Yannis lives for twenty-three years in these conditions, devoid of human company, until one day he sees a beautiful woman on his island. She is a survivor of another shipwreck, as the narrator informs us, the daughter of an Italian ship's captain and a Greek mother. This encounter is in the context of the second part of the novel, which explores the way love develops between two people in extreme living conditions outside organised society. The love he experiences for the girl will give Yannis back the human characteristics he had lost in the hardships of the everyday life he had been forced to live there. The theme of love is important because it reinforces the main idea of the novel that humans need to interact with each other and to feel accepted by others.

In the first part of the novel *Psycharis* has retained some elements from Defoe's novel, such as the overall atmosphere from *Robinson Crusoe's* last shipwreck, when he was stranded in an island off Venezuela, onwards. Readers of Defoe's novel know, however, that even before that, *Robinson Crusoe* had had a few similar adventures as a result of his roving spirit, because of which he defied his family's wishes for his well-being. *Robinson Crusoe* had developed an addiction to travelling, seduced by the process of trading with indigenous people and making a profit. These ideas are absent from *Psycharis's* novel, where the main character is a simple man whose main fault is not taking other people into consideration.

Nevertheless, like Crusoe, who defied his father's plans for him to settle down and lead a hard-working, middle-class life, choosing instead to travel and thereby ending up in trouble, Yannis too defied the captain of his ship, albeit unintentionally, and was faced with similar troubles.

Furthermore, Defoe's novel is referred to directly in Psycharis's text: the narrator of *Ζωή κι αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* suggests that the captain of Yannis's ship must have got the idea of abandoning Yannis on the uninhabited island from Defoe's novel. As he explains, the captain had read the book and considered it unconvincing, and used Yannis's case as an experiment to see what would happen in 'real life':

Ο καπετάνιος βέβαια σκοπό δεν είχε να τον αφήσει όλη του τη ζωή στη Σάντα Κλάρα. Λογάριαζε μάλιστα να ξανάρθει σ' ένα δυό χρόνια, να τον πάρει. Μα είτανε πολύ περίεργος άνθρωπος αφτός ο καπετάνιος, ίσως και λιγάκι παράξενος, καλός, μπρούσκος, απότομος στην κουβέντα, με θέληση με κρίση και με δυο γράμματα. Έβγαινε τότες ένα περίφημο ρομάντσο στην Εβρώπη, ο Robinson Crusoe του D. De Foe· είχε βγη δηλαδή τώρα χρόνια, μεταφράστηκε ως και ρωμαίικα, μα μεταφράστηκε μόνο στον καιρό που έγιναν όσα λέμε. Ο καπετάνιος μας το λοιπόν άρπαξε μια μετάφραση, τη διάβασε, την πέταξε χάμου, είπε· — Παραμύθια! Και τον πήρανε οι λογισμοί· — Αφτό, λέει, θα τόχη γραμμένο κανένας μαραγκός, να μας δείξει πως κατέχει τη μαραγκική [...] στη μοναξιά βάζει κανείς άλλα με το νου του. Καιρός δεν του απομνήσκει να καταγίνεται σε τέτοια πράματα [...] Γλήγορα θα το νοιώσει ο Γιάννης, κ' η ζωή του θαλλάξει από άκρη σε άκρη (Psycharis 1991: 59-60).<sup>4</sup>

Behind these comments readers can perceive the author's belief that his work is a more realistic version of the story presented in *Robinson Crusoe*. Indeed, the latter is dismissed by the captain of Yannis's ship as 'παραμύθι' (see also below). As the captain of the novel suggests, life in solitude is not like an expedition, and people end

<sup>4</sup>The 1991 Ouranis edition from which I quote is a faithful reproduction of the 1904 edition of the novel by Estia. Henceforth, page numbers will be given in parenthesis after each quotation.

up losing their courage as their character changes.<sup>5</sup> Psycharis believed that the harsh living conditions and being deprived of human company would provoke significant changes in his character. Therefore, from the beginning, the author/narrator of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη* points out the plan for this novel: its aim is to discredit Defoe's work as implausible. Psycharis had openly expressed this view in his dedication of the French version of 1922 (entitled *Le Solitaire du Pacifique*) to Mme Jeanne Dick May. As some time had passed since the novel had first appeared (in Greek), he openly explained that, "[l]e Solitaire du Pacifique, lui aussi, par toute sa conception, par toute sa donnée, proteste contre le fameux Robinson Crusoe, un des chefs-d'œuvres, affirme-t-on, de nos voisins, amis et même alliés: les Anglais (Psichari 1922: 8).

Although Psycharis aims to respond to Daniel Defoe or at least to open up a dialogue with his novel, he informs readers in the afterword that his character is also based on two real-life castaways, one being Alexander Selkirk, who was the original model for Defoe's work, and the other a French sailor named Narcisse Peltier (1991: 305-6).<sup>6</sup> Indeed, Selkirk's adventures took place in the early eighteenth century like Yannis's and the island of Mas-a-Tierra, where Selkirk was stranded, is the second island inhabited by Yannis in the Juan Fernandez archipelago. Furthermore, Selkirk ended up there because of a dispute he had had with the captain of his ship "over the unseaworthiness of the ship *Cinque Ports*", which was going on an expedition in South America (Byars 2002: 2); likewise, Yannis had been reprimanded by the captain of his ship for disobeying orders. Yannis ends up being the only member of

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<sup>5</sup>Furthermore, Robinson Crusoe, never really experienced the terror of absolute isolation, as he had the company of Friday and others for some of the time on the island, while Yannis remained without human company for many years. As Psycharis points out in the afterword: "Επειτα τι να σου πω; Αποφασιστική δε μου φαίνεται διόλου η απόδειξη του D. de Foe. Μοναξιώτης είναι αφτός; Του δίνει ο μυθιστοριογράφος, να τάχη μαζί του, ένα σωρό πράματα, που είναι πράματα του πολιτισμού· του δίνει σύντροφο στο Νησί του ως κ' ένα σκυλί από το καράβι, έναν παπαγάλλο και τι ξέρω ακόμη; [...] Κατόπι βρίσκει και τον Παρασκεβά· κ' οι δυο τους πια χωριό" (306).

<sup>6</sup>It is traditionally believed that Alexander Selkirk was the inspiration for Defoe's character. As Seidel points out, "Defoe knew well the circumstances of the Selkirk account as did most everyone in London [...]" (1991: 39).



his ship to survive, and eventually returns to Europe, just as Selkirk was the only member of his crew to return to England (ibid). Even though Selkirk's exile only lasted four years, by the time he was rescued he had forgotten human speech and had acquired the characteristics of an animal: “Ο Σελκίρκης κάθησε τέσσερα χρόνια στο ρημονήσι του, αποξέχασε σ’ αυτό το διάστημα κάθε ανθρώπινη λαλιά, έμαθε να τρέχει πιο γρήγορις από τις κατσίκες, και όταν ήρθανε να τον πάρουν, έμοιαζε σα να είχε γίνη κι αφτός άλλο ζώο με τα ζώα” (306). Selkirk's battle with melancholy and fear and his subsequent adjustment to the environment, hunting and capturing goats, could have provided the inspiration for similar passages in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά*, though these scenes could equally have been taken from Defoe's novel.

The other possible model for the character Yannis is Narcisse Peltier. In this case also, what interested Psycharis was the eventual loss of speech and the possibility of recovering it. Narcisse Peltier was stranded in the wild for seventeen years, had lost his speech and was only able to recover this faculty with great difficulty, with the aid of writing. The narrator used his example to indicate to readers that Yannis's loss of speech was inevitable under the circumstances. When Yannis was forced to communicate with Myriella, he found himself unable to utter anything, and only after a mental struggle did he remember how to scribble his name in the sand and give her, in that way, the first sign of his human identity:

Δηγούνται ένα πολύ παράξενο περιστατικό, που το πάθαινε κι ο Γιάννης τώρα στο Νησί του, απaráλλαχτα το ίδιο. Ένας νάφτης, ο Ναρσίς Πελτιέ, αφού κάθησε δέκα εφτά χρόνια με τους άγριους, είχε ξεχάσει ολότελα τη μητρική λαλιά του. Όταν ήρθε κατόπι και τον ήβρε κάποιος συντοπίτης του, ο νάφτης έβαζε τα δυνατά του να καταλάβη τις λέξεις που άκουγε ανώφελα ταφτί του [...] Ο Γιάννης ο δύστυχος χαρτί και πέννα δεν είχε [...] Έπιασε να σημαδέβη, να τσουγγρανίζη στον άμμο με τα χέρια, με τα νύχια, να παθαίνεται και να δέρνεται ο κακομοίρης, βυθισμένος στη δουλειά του, κ’ έμοιαζε σα νάβοσκε ο νους

του σε λιβάδια σκοτεινά, όπου γύρευε κάτι να βρη, να του  
φέξη (231-2).

The author supports the reliability of his information regarding the development of his character with evidence coming outside the fictional world. Therefore, at least three possible sources of inspiration are explicitly mentioned in the narrative for the creation of character, setting and plot in the first part of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη*: the fictional work *Robinson Crusoe*, the original inspiration behind the character of Robinson Crusoe, the sailor Alexander Selkirk, and the story of another sailor, Narcisse Peltier, as stated above. Related to all of these stories of isolation and extreme living conditions, is Aristotle's maxim from Book One of his *Politics* (*Πολιτικά*) that man is a social animal, which Psycharis believed to be true. And he aimed to demonstrate this idea with his story: "Στα μπόσικα δεν είπε ο γερο Αριστοτέλης μας πως ο άνθρωπος είναι «ζώον πολιτικόν», ή σαν προτιμάτε, πως δίχως συντροφιά δεν μπορεί και του κάκου. Ίσως γιατί ο Γιάννης γεννήθηκε απόγονός του, ας είναι και μακριανός, δεν τα βόλεψε τόσο έφκολα όπως κι ο Εβρωπαίος (207, the emphasis as it is in the text).<sup>7</sup>

The second part of the novel, which emphasises the healing and restoring powers of love, is a critique of the basically naturalistic model of writing in the first part of the narrative. In the second part, Psycharis argues against the dehumanisation of his subjects, he demonstrates that they have souls, not just basic instincts, and delivers them into a better existence at the end. By contrast, naturalistic novels emphasise the baser instincts of humans which make them resemble animals and typical characters in such novels end up being destroyed or assimilated by nature (Abrams 1999: 262) The archetypal naturalistic novel is *Thérèse Raquin* (1866). In

<sup>7</sup> "[Ε]κ τούτων οὖν φανερόν ὅτι τῶν φύσει ἡ πόλις ἐστὶ, καὶ ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος φύσει πολιτικὸν ζῶον [...]" (Newman 1887: 3 & Aristotle 1993: 54).

Greek literature a typical naturalistic novel is Karkavitsas's *O Ζητιάνος* (1897), and most of Voutyras's short stories written in the beginning of the twentieth century. In the second part of the novel which depicts the love between two people, Myriella's character takes precedence. Even though Myriella is frightened at first by Yannis, little by little, forced by necessity, she starts getting close to him and she even manages to teach him how to speak again. Fortunately, Myriella is saved from the impending dehumanisation that the existence on the island might have condemned her to, because a captain of another ship manages to pick up the two castaways, together with another sailor, who had become stranded on Yannis's first island, Santa-Clara.

Psycharis gave two other sources of inspiration for the second part of the novel, which examines the importance of love: the tale of Longus and a long poem by Tennyson. The author explained in the afterword that he had taken as his guide for the depiction of love in isolation, the romance by Longus *Τὰ περί Δάφνην και Χλόην*, which he defined as a well-known "small pearl" of Greek literature (315). Indeed although little was known about Longus himself, and even his name caused doubts as to his Greek origin, his tale "would appear to have exercised considerable influence upon [...] Greek romances, both in regard to incident and style; and it is also said to have suggested the modern pastorals, particularly those which appeared in Italy in the sixteenth century" (Longus n.d: ix).<sup>8</sup> According to Beaton, "the pastoral setting of *Daphnis and Chloe* is [...] that of a timeless golden age [...] of pastoral innocence first explored by Theokritos" (1989: 53). Similarly, in Psycharis's novel, one can recognise in many descriptions of nature, the desire to portray the idyllic scenery and

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<sup>8</sup>The anonymous English translation of this romance, from which I quote the editor's/translator's comments above, is not dated. The only indication of its date is a comment in the text where the translator explains that "a purse of 3000 drachmas was equivalent to £123" (p. 107). Beaton gives 1792 as the date of the reappearance of Longus's narrative in Greek, in his *Introduction to Modern Greek Literature* (1994: 51n). Psycharis mentions that he had read the 1904 Estia edition, in the translation of E. Voutieridis (Psycharis 1991: 315).

the innocence of the main character. The more the latter lives with nature, away from civilisation, the more he sheds the burden of his past and reaches an ideal condition of perfect harmony with the environment. Nevertheless, the harmonious existence is very precarious and the balance is easily tipped: the island becomes menacing to the extent of dehumanising him. As soon as Myriella appears in the setting, Yannis starts rediscovering his former self and there is an innocence about the way that the two characters relate to each other outside moral and social confines. However, the adventures that usually test the love and endanger the union of two people, so typical of Greek romances, are absent in this case. This is because the adventures are presented mainly in the first part of the novel, and there is an emphasis on the softer side of life in the second part. Therefore, whereas as we have seen the first part of the novel is inspired mainly by *Robinson Crusoe*, the second part has some similarities with Greek romances, such as *Τα περί Δάφνην και Χλόην*.

Like *Robinson Crusoe*, Longus's story *Τα περί Δάφνην και Χλόην* had appeared in many Greek editions and translations in various languages, "testifying to the interest of the work for scholars, and to its popularity among readers in all parts of the civilised world" (Longus n.d: ix). It is therefore apparent that Psycharis places his own novel in the line of two traditions, the European novel of adventure and exoticism, and the Greek pastoral romance of late antiquity.

On the other hand, Tennyson's poem *Enoch Arden* also poignantly presents the story of a sailor stranded in a far-away island who, having lost the love of his life, ends up losing his desire to live:

Once likewise, in the ringing of his ears,  
Tho' faintly, merrily – far and far away –  
He heard the pealing of his parish bells;  
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore, started up  
Shuddering, and when the beauteous hateful isle  
Return'd upon him, had not his poor heart  
Spoken with That, which being everywhere

Lets none, who speaks with Him, seem all alone,  
 Surely the man had died of solitude  
 (Tennyson 1995: 157, v.609-617).

Psycharis mentions the last line of Tennyson's poem in his afterword as a far more plausible consequence of solitude than the one put forward by Defoe, in order to reinforce his own message: "[π]ολύ πιο βαθυστόχαστα είπε κάπου στον *Enoch Arden* ο Tennyson: *Surely the man had died of solitude*" (310). He implies that way that he also had in mind this poem when he wrote his novel.

## 2. The objectives of the novel

In setting out to prove Defoe's novel unrealistic with his *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά*, Psycharis subscribed to Aristotle's maxim. He insists that his re-writing of the story takes into consideration the psychological effects of loneliness in his character, in accordance with the Aristotelian philosophy, which had so perceptively described the human condition. As he explains in a humorous tone:

Ο περίφημος ο Ρομπινσώνας, αφού κάθησε στη Μασατιέρα είκοσι οχτώ χρόνια, δυο εβδομάδες και δεκαννιά μέρες, γύρισε ήσυχά στον τόπο του, σα ναρχότανε από κανένα νόστιμο ταξιδάκι, κι όταν πρωτοείδε άνθρωπο στην ερμιά, έπιασε μαζί του τις κουβέντες λες και να τον είχε αποχαιρετήσει από τα ψες. Τόσον καιρό που έμεινε ολομόναχος, δεν ξέχασε μάλιστα ούτε μια μερούλα να σημειώνη σ' ένα παλούκι – θάτανε παλούκι από σόι – πόσο βαστούσε η εξορία του, τι λέω, η καλοπέρασή του στο Νησί. Αφτά κανείς υποθέτω πως τα βλέπει μόνο σ' ένα ρομάντσο. Η αλήθεια μας τα παρουσιάζει τα πράγματα κάπως αλλιώς. Στα μπόσικα δεν είτε ο γερο Αριστοτέλης μας πως ο άνθρωπος είναι «ζώον πολιτικόν», ή σαν προτιμάτε, πως δίχως συντροφιά δεν μπορεί και του κάκου. Ίσως γιατί ο Γιάννης γεννήθηκε απόγονός του, ας είναι και μακριανός, δεν τα βόλεψε τόσο έφκολα όπως κι ο Εβρωπαίος (206-7).

According to the author's assumption, if Aristotle was right when he pronounced that only God and animals can live in absolute loneliness and man cannot tolerate living

alone, then, consequently, the sequence of events in *Robinson Crusoe* was unrealistic and inconsistent with human nature.<sup>9</sup> Even if that were the case, one may wonder why that would be such a problem in a work of fiction. From his comments inserted in the narrative, it appears that Psycharis places great emphasis on the verisimilitude of a literary work. He believes that the overall plausibility of the story (representation of an external objective reality) should not be compromised for the benefit of imagination and creative freedom. For this reason, he refers to Defoe's novel as 'παράμυθι' (fiction) and wants to defend his view against Defoe's through the development of the main character (see also Chapter 3, p. 103-4, and Section 5 below).

In addition, as with the rest of his prose, Psycharis's aim in writing this novel was to create a literary tradition of novels written in the demotic language. As he explained in the introduction to the French edition: "Mon Solitaire, dans sa rédaction originale, appartenait, vous le savez, à cette longue série d'ouvrages d'imagination destinés, dans ma pensée, à créer la prose littéraire de la Grèce moderne [...]" (1922: 7). The novel can be viewed as an allegory for the language problem in Greece. The character's escape or return to a non-social existence paves the way for his reacquisition of language with the help of the appropriate instructor. Initially, the main character communes only with nature, so he gradually loses his speech and learns symbolic writing, using his body as the tool and the island where he has been castaway as the blank sheet. In the second part of the novel, there is a partial reintroduction of some form of social existence and the character has to learn again how to speak with the help of his new half-Italian, half-Greek companion. The assistance he receives to redevelop his linguistic skills means that his story offers an

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<sup>9</sup>-“Ο δέ μή δυνάμενος κοινωνεῖν ἢ μηδέν δεόμενος δι’ αὐτάρκειαν οὐθέν μέρος πόλεως, ὥστε ἢ θηρίον ἢ θεός” (Newman 1887: 4 & Aristotle 1993: 56).



example to readers of the acquisition and development of language. Psycharis wants to promote the concept of the organic form of language; in other words, to exemplify a theory which considers language not as static and immutable but as a skill which evolves according to the internal energy of the speaker and his context.

The narrative promotes the idea of a different linguistic situation for Greek society from what had hitherto existed, emphasising indirectly the significance of the language of the people. In synecdochical terms, Myriella comes from Dante's line, because she is half-Italian. This is important because Dante was considered by the author as the teacher of language for his people, since, in his time, he had supported the use of the non-standardised Tuscan dialect as opposed to the official Latin, and through his writings, he moulded the Tuscan dialect into the degree of perfection it has maintained ever since in Italian literature (Psycharis 1903b: 3, Botta 1887: 61). Evidently the reference to Dante aims to reinforce a connection between the Greek and Italian language issues, as will be pointed out below: "[...] κ' εΐτανε θέαμα περίεργο, μα κι ωραίο συνάμα, ο γιος του Ομήρου να ξαναμαθαΐνη τη λαλιά του από την κόρη του Ντάντε" (233).

Thus, the narrative aims to prove three main points that need to be addressed in this analysis. These are: man's inability to live alone outside the confines of social and moral laws; the use of language as a tool of communication and as an expression of one's world-view; and finally, the connection between the process of creative writing and the solitary existence. Significantly, in the latter case, in order to reinforce this connection, Psycharis has included a photograph of himself at the beginning of the novel, showing him alone in his study writing, with the caption: "γράφοντας τη Ζωή κι Αγάπη, στη μοναξιά μου" (50).

With regard to the first point, man's inability to live alone, the events in the novel follow Taine's theory about the influence of the environment on individuals, and the Darwinian evolutionary concepts which justify the mental development and the changes in the physical appearance of the main character. In relation to the second point, the author wants to emphasise the importance of language for communication between human beings, and as a skill which distinguishes the higher level of intellectual life from the lower one. He wants to suggest as well the ability of the Greek demotic to express any concept. The exotic setting of the story, the extreme circumstances of life and the incidents described, provide an opportunity to use many new words. This links metaphorically with the return of the main character to nature, away from society, which signifies new beginnings. The third point which will be discussed in relation to didacticism, refers to creative writing. The creative process and the role of the artist in society are recurring themes in Psycharis's novels, to such an extent that he frequently refers to the act of writing at the expense of the plot. In this novel, some of these metafictional strategies are linked to the central character's solitary existence, making the story appear like a metaphor for the endeavours of the writer. Finally, it is important according to Psycharis, that readers appreciate any literary work if it is to achieve its purpose. The connection between author and readers reflects the enduring association between the 'self' and the 'other', the 'I' and the 'you' which are the main focus of the novel.

### **3. The effects of solitude on the individual**

Taine's deterministic theories held that man was the product of heredity, historical conditioning, and environment (1880: 17). Psycharis must have based his

narrative partly on this theoretical basis, but *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* is also a critique of the model which inspired it.<sup>10</sup>

As pointed out above the novel could be viewed as an example of the process of ‘hypothesis, experiment and verification’: Yannis is left on the uninhabited island by the captain of the ship with the purpose of teaching him a lesson. The author aims to prove to readers that his character will not be able to cope with the demands of the situation and will lose his most essential human characteristics. This is in accordance with Taine’s theory which proposed that:

Different climate and situation bring [...] various needs, and consequently a different course of activity; and this, again, a different set of habits; and still again, a different set of aptitudes and instincts. Man, forced to accommodate himself to circumstances, contracts a temperament and a character corresponding to them; and his character, like his temperament, is so much more stable, as the external impression is made upon him by more numerous repetitions, and is transmitted to his progeny by a more ancient descent (Taine 1880 vol. 1: 18).

Not only the captain – who can be perceived as the fictional alter ego of the author himself – expresses this certainty in the novel, but also, Yannis’s fellow sailors make advance mention of the unfavourable outcome when they escort him ashore. The companions appear very briefly in the beginning of the novel, and they function like the chorus in Greek tragedies, predicting what is going to happen in the rest of the story.<sup>11</sup> The narrator presents and explains in detail the various stages of transformation of the main character in accordance with the conditions he is facing

<sup>10</sup>Psycharis, like most of the intellectuals of his era, enthusiastically followed the developments of positivism: the belief in science, the attention to facts, the methodology of observation and experiment (see also Kriaras 1981: 51).

<sup>11</sup>In their efforts to make Yannis feel better, the sailors talk continuously and they express what they should have been careful to hide: “– Έννοια σου κ’είναι παράδεισος το Νησάκι. Θα χρυσοπεράσης εδώ. – Εδώ ζώο δε θα γίνης!” (55). The narration will confirm the opposite but this mention is not accidental; even though the sailors’ comments express the opposite of the truth, the author manages to convey from the start his beliefs regarding Yannis’s destiny.

and will demonstrate through Yannis's adventures his hypothesis that a solitary existence is incompatible with human nature. Yannis is therefore not only a fictional character but also the subject of an experiment. His case, together with that of Narcisse Peltier which is mentioned in the narrative, will demonstrate to readers the validity of the author's views.

As soon as his exile begins, Yannis becomes the only character for a substantial part of the novel, and therefore the narrative focuses closely on his everyday activities. Even though he appears to be self-confident at the outset of his adventures, there are certain doubts in his mind. He wonders whether the island is really deserted or not, and whether there are any wild animals or wild people such as cannibals, as he has heard many stories from other sailors about these islands. Paradoxically, Yannis tries to ensure his isolation in the first few weeks by exploring the island as much as possible. The narrator explains that Yannis's fear was only to be expected under the circumstances and asserts that Yannis's famous predecessor, Robinson Crusoe, had once felt the same: "Ένας άλλος μοναξιώτης, περίφημος, πολύ πιο γνωστός από το δικό μας, έκαμε την ίδια πεποίθηση, μόλις που έφτασε στο ρημονήσι του, και κρύφτηκε αμέσως από το φόβο του μήπως ανταμώση άνθρωπο ή πράμα, που να κακοπάθη" (98).<sup>12</sup>

In the beginning, Yannis has a very clear idea of who he is and what he is not. This is indicated in the way he is introduced by the narrator, who informs readers about his native island of Naxos and his occupation, and also by the way Yannis distinguishes himself from the other possible inhabitants of the island, who would be either animals or wild people: "[...] Ακούς εκεί; Νησιώτης και νάφτης, Αξιώτης, και να μην περπατώ ξυπόλητος! " (65), " [...] γιατί να είσαι μόνος λαμπρό πράμα, να σε

<sup>12</sup>The author tends to compare his character, both with Defoe's character Robinson Crusoe and with the real castaway Narcisse Peltier, in order to suggest that his own manner of depicting events has credibility..

τρώνε όμως τα ζα ή να σε πετσοκόβουν οι άγριοι, όσο κοιμάσαι, δεν αξίζει [...]" (64).

About a week after Yannis settles on the island, subtle changes begin taking place in his psychology, as related by the narrator. These are the result of all the things that trouble him and that he does not want to acknowledge consciously. First, the narrator presents a general statement, which could be applied to anyone, and then he reaffirms his views using the example of his fictional character: "Με τη μοναξιά πολλαπλασιάζονται μέσα μας όσα νοιώθουμε, γιατί νοιώθουμε τα παραμικρά με δύναμη περισσότερη, προσέχουμε περισσότερο στα καθέκαστα, απομονωμένοι σαν που είμαστε. Η απομόνωση λοιπόν, όχι το κλίμα, το φταίει που παθαίνουμε μian αλάλητη σταναχώρια και που την παθαίνουνε ως κ' οι πιο αντεξιάρηδες" (93). Then the narrator conveys to readers the increasing power of the environment over the castaway and informs them about Yannis's terrifying dreams. It is as if the environment itself is hostile, preventing his wellbeing or trying to envelop and devour him. At least this is how the character perceives it, because the solitary existence has distorted his vision. We see, therefore, that the author gradually presents the changes that are taking place in the psychology of the character, in a realistic way, in accordance with the unusual circumstances. Together with the omniscient narrator readers observe what is taking place in the fictional world, and are in a position to evaluate the information given as correct, that is complying with the narrative requirements. Even though the setting is exotic and far away from readers' everyday reality, the author's intention was not to create a folktale this time, but a realistic account and to convince them of his views, the impossibility of life in solitude, and how events in his narrative were more plausible than those described in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

In presenting Yannis's inner struggle, the narrator refers to two sets of values, which are important for the existence of the main character and for each individual: the power of each person against the power of the community (κοινωνία), and life in an exotic, wild environment as opposed to organised city living. He explains that the human being cannot face nature alone and is thus unable to survive. Therefore, in order to lead an organised life, it is necessary to have not only a community but also to master the environment, tame the disarray and reduce the consequences of the unpredictable:

Τάφταιγε όλα ο τόπος, τάφταιγε η μοναξιά κ' η φύση που στη μοναξιά φανερώνεται μ' όλη την άγρια κι ακράτητη δύναμή της. Στις πολιτείες που ζούμε, η δουλειά μας είναι να πολεμούμε τη φύση ακατάπαφτα. Δεν την αφήνουμε να πατήση εκεί που πατούμε· χτίζουμε σπίτια, κάνουμε δρόμους, ανοίγουμε στράτες, θρέφουμε ζώα, στήνουμε κοινωνία, είμαστε αναμεταξύ μας, κι άμα είμαστε μαζί, θέλει δε θέλει, πρέπει κάπου η φύση να σταθή· δεν μπορεί να πάη παρέκει από ένα σημάδι, παρέκει από το μέρος που βρίσκονται οι άνθρωποι κ' οι πολιτείες. Ο άνθρωπος σωρός σηκώνεται σαν τοίχος που σταματάει την ορμή της. Στη μοναξιά δεν είναι το ίδιο· η φύση παντού ξαπλώνεται, παντού περεχιέται, αφού είναι λήφτερη και μόνη. Ένας άνθρωπος, ένα τιποτένιο άτομο σταλιά δε λογαριάζει μπρος στη δημιουργία, που τη βλέπει αλάκαιρη και που κανένα πράμα, μήτε σπίτι, μήτε καλύβα, μήτε κεραμίδι δεν του τη σκεπάζει. Το νοιώθει ο ίδιος, καταλαβαίνει τη μικρουλιά του κι αρχίζει να φοβάται (96-7).<sup>13</sup>

We can recognise in the above quotation echoes of the Darwinian concepts that were also gaining force in the social sciences in the later nineteenth century (social Darwinism). For example, the instinct for survival was a concept often used in a

<sup>13</sup> Psycharis has also expressed elsewhere, in particular in *To Ταξίδι μου*, that the individual does not amount to anything ("Το εγώ τίποτις δεν είναι", 1993: 39) but the discourse here emphasises something more than the dichotomy between the collective and the singular, it emphasises the importance of a civilised, organised society.



social context with varying implications in post-Darwinian thought, and Psycharis must have been aware of all these developments in social thinking.<sup>14</sup>

One of the leading thinkers behind the doctrine, Félix Le Dantec, was teaching general biology at the Sorbonne in 1899 – a time when Psycharis was also teaching there (Clark 1984: 205n). The former had famously argued that “the most important human struggle for life was the Lamarckian one waged against the environment, not against other men”, exemplified in his dictum: ‘être c’est lutter, vivre c’est vaincre’ (ibid: 74). All of these concepts are filtered through Psycharis’s novel as part of the main character’s constant battle with his surroundings. However, the same idea of competition that had been shown to be a pillar of the capitalist system in the Western world did not interest Psycharis (Dictionary of the History of Ideas 1973 II: 180-1). He focused instead on the power of the community relating it to the general progress, the cultural development, and the happiness of its members.

The authorial tone in the passage cited above conveys objectivity, and makes evident the plan to propose a specific programme: by examining a particular case, the author is able to provide general laws that could benefit all. Thematically, it is also important that the narrator makes this distinction, as he emphasises the notion of solitude whether in city life or in the wild, though he stresses the latter is more difficult to cope with. In addition, he argues that only a combined collective effort of many people can produce beneficial results for their welfare. The above quotation follows the tradition of an earlier system of thought, and refers directly to Aristotle’s *Politics*:

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<sup>14</sup>The term ‘Social Darwinism’ referred to “the application of the Darwinian theories of natural selection and the struggle for existence to the evolution of human society” (Clark 1984: 1).

[...] ἡ δὲ τούτων κοινωνία ποιεῖ οἰκίαν καὶ πόλιν. καὶ πρότερον δὲ τῇ φύσει πόλις ἢ οἰκία καὶ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐστίν. τό γάρ ὅλον πρότερον ἀναγκαῖον εἶναι τοῦ μέρους· ἀναιρουμένου γάρ τοῦ ὅλου οὐκ ἔσται πούς οὐδὲ χεῖρ, εἰ μὴ ὁμωνύμως, ὥσπερ εἴ τις λέγοι τὴν λιθίνην· διαφθαρεῖσα γάρ ἔσται τοιαύτη, πάντα δὲ τῶ ἔργῳ ὠρίσται καὶ τῇ δυνάμει, ὥστε μηκέτι τοιαῦτα ὄντα οὐ λεκτέον τὰ αὐτὰ εἶναι ἀλλ' ὁμώνυμα. ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ πόλις καὶ φύσει καὶ πρότερον ἢ ἕκαστος, δῆλον [...] (Newman 1887: 3-4 & Aristotle 1993: 54 & 56).

In Aristotle's philosophy it is stressed that it is in people's nature to create an organised community and be part of it, and this instinct is so powerful that it guides human behaviour and actions. A similar view is also expressed by the narrator of the novel, who stresses that only an organised community can perform all the necessary actions required to ensure the wellbeing of its members. Even though Yannis Petroyannis was used to being alone, he was still part of civilised society. His existence in the wild, however, offered a freedom from organised community life that created a psychological void within him, which was difficult to fill.

After a period of isolation, according to the description given by the narrator, changes were apparent in Yannis's behaviour. Metaphorically speaking, Yannis had no hope of surviving unless he adapted fully to the environment and developed skills suitable for his existence there. These changes gradually took him away from his human nature, altering his psychology and physical appearance, while his visions helped him subconsciously to prepare for and adapt to these alterations. The one thing that kept him alive was the instinct for survival, which is the strongest instinct in all living beings. In this part of the narrative, the narrator goes once again from the particular to the general, first explaining Yannis's feelings and then pointing out that

his case was representative of anyone who might have been in his place.<sup>15</sup> Thus the tone of writing which alternates between the general and the particular, aims once more to convince readers of the truthfulness and the validity of the views put forward by the narrator: “Βέβαιο πως μόνο με τέτοιο σκοπό συντηριούνταν ο Γιάννης και πως δεν του έμελε διόλου να συντηρηθή για να χαίρεται τη μοναξιά του, αφού την απόφεβγε όπου κι αν την έβλεπε. Το μυστικό ψυχόρμητο, που μας δίνει στα βάσανα πομονή, δείχνοντάς μας τη μελλούμενη σωτηρία, κινούσε γλυκά και τα σπλάχνα του Γιάννη προς μιαν άφταστη ελπίδα ” (110).<sup>16</sup>

The author describes Yannis's reverse evolution using as his support the dominant scientific theories of the period. He presents the beliefs that were gaining credence at the time through the development of biology, and makes the character comply with these. The character's acclimatisation is a typical example of the instinct which exists in all living organisms, to make use of the conditions in which they find themselves, in order to be able to adapt and survive, and the transformation into an animal is required for his survival. His hair grows unchecked to protect him from the natural elements and he gradually loses his speech which is not essential for his survival. After only four months Yannis loses half his nature and acquires half of another nature, sometimes animal, sometimes vegetal, part of the immediate environment that embraces him menacingly and alters his characteristics<sup>17</sup>:

<sup>15</sup>See also Robinson's points regarding the function of the narrative voice in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, 1988: 56.

<sup>16</sup>Significantly, the expression of the desire for a return to a social existence is made by the narrator and not by the main character. The main character, according to the descriptions in the narrative and not the inserted comments, which aim to provide suitable explanations, seems confused and could not have had such clear goals and logical reasoning. This point indicates the author's policy of pursuing the novel's thesis from start to finish.

<sup>17</sup>The motif of the metamorphosis, and in particular, transformation into an animal, is frequently encountered in nineteenth-century novels and even before, as far back as the Homeric epics (Pitsipios 1995: 19). It is supposed to be a form of punishment of the soul for its sins or generally for the person's excessive behaviour. Usually rehabilitation follows, when the transformed person either repents or understands his/her mistakes. In Greek literature of the period, the most successful allegory of the kind

Λένε πως η ανάγκη φέρνει στον άνθρωπο και το χρειαζόμενο όργανο, για να κάμει ό,τι θέλει. Δηγούνται μάλιστα, μέσα στάλλα, οι φυσιολόγοι πως κάτι ζώα, οι καμηλοπαρδάλεις, λόγου χάρη, κάνανε λίγο λίγο μακρή λαιμό, για ναρπάζουνε πιο έφκολα τη θροφή που τις φαίνονταν η προτιμότερη [...] Το αντίθετο παρατηρούμε σ' άλλα μερικά που έπαθε ο φίλος, γιατί άμα η ανάγκη πάψη στον άνθρωπο να δουλέβη, τότες αποσβειέται σιγά και όργανο, που καταντάει άχρηστο (209).

The victory of nature over Yannis (or Yannis's victory over nature in the sense that he is able to survive) is almost certain when the transformation appears to be complete and he leads the same life as his companions, the wild goats and dogs: "[...] ο καημένος μας ο Γιάννης, που είτανε τώρα θαμμένος στην πρασινάδα της Σάντα Κλάρας, μισό άνθρωπος, μισό ζώο, ίσως μάλιστα και μισό φυτό [...] αφού η παντοδύναμη φύση τον είχε δεμένο με χίλιες κλωστές και χίλια φάδια, σα να του έπλεκε ύφασμα να τον αποσκεπάση αλάκαιρο με τακούραστα της τα φύλλα [...]" (115). It is only then that the author introduces another castaway into the novel, a girl called Myriella. By observing another human being for the first time in a very long period, Yannis realises how far he has changed since he first came to the island. Even though his wild instincts dominate at first and he rapes Myriella, he is able to realise despite his confusion how different he is to her.

It is significant that the narrator uses the verb 'δηγούμαι' (in the extract quoted above) to introduce the physiological discoveries of the period. In this respect as well as in similar mentions of the subject in the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, the convergence of science with fiction is treated as something natural. As has been pointed out in Chapter Four, this convergence not only suggests the status of science at the time, based on hypothesis and experimentation for which imaginative qualities

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is found in the recently discovered and analysed novel of Iakovos Pitsipios, *Ο Πίθηκος Ξουθ ή τα Ήθη του Αιώνος* (1848) (Pitsipios 1995). See also Mike 2001.

were required, but also that of fiction, which was far closer to scientific process and methodology than it is today, popularising the advances of science. According to Beer's claims:

In the mid-nineteenth century [...] it was possible for a reader to turn to the primary works of scientists as they appeared, and to respond directly to the arguments advanced. Moreover, scientists themselves in their literary texts drew openly upon literary, historical and philosophical material as part of their arguments [...] because of the shared discourse not only ideas but metaphors, myths, and narrative patterns could move rapidly and freely to and fro between scientists and non-scientists [...] (Beer 1983: 7).

Psycharis supports this connection between fiction and science, as the novel is based implicitly on the tenets of Naturalism, and since the central idea of the experiment suggests some scientific aspirations. In the second part, with the appearance of Myriella, love takes precedence over other issues in order to show that the character had not lost his soul. But there is one thing that love cannot achieve, and this is to make animals speak like humans, because speech, as Aristotle pointed out, is an essential human characteristic. Therefore, according to the narration which follows Aristotle's teaching, language is the distinguishing mark which defines one's identity as human or non-human: "οὐθέν γάρ, ὡς φαμέν, μάτην ἢ φύσις ποιεῖ· λόγον δέ μόνον ἄνθρωπος ἔχει τῶν ζώων· ἡ μὲν οὖν φωνή τοῦ λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος ἐστὶ σημεῖον, διό καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ὑπάρχει ζώοις· μέχρι γάρ τούτου ἡ φύσις αὐτῶν ἐλήλυθε, τοῦ ἔχειν αἰσθησιν λυπηροῦ καὶ ἡδέος καὶ ταῦτα σημαίνειν ἀλλήλοις· ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστὶ τό συμφέρον καὶ τό βλαβερόν, ὥστε καὶ τό δίκαιον καὶ τό ἀδίκον· τοῦτο γάρ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἴδιον" (Newman 1887: 3 & Aristotle 1993: 54).

#### 4. The importance of language for a social existence

The narrative suggests that language is the essential tool of communication between humans, whereas the inability to conceive and to give linguistic form to abstract notions suggests a non-human state. It also shows that language can be regained even when lost – as in Yannis’s case – and the process of regaining this ability is parallel to the developments that take place in the psychology of the main character. According to the narrator, language reflects how one views the world and how circumscribed one’s existence is. Language follows the speaker’s perceptions and the mental processes of recognising and ordering things according to his/her experience. Therefore, it is not surprising that language is one of the characteristics that Yannis loses as a result of his solitary existence, not only because there is no need for him to communicate with other people, but also because his existence becomes repetitive and monotonous, and this is reflected in his world-view, which becomes extremely restricted. For the same reason, when he finds a human companion and starts remembering his human nature, communicating through language becomes essential. As a result, when Yannis starts speaking again, his previous companion, his favourite goat, is excluded from the human company as it cannot use language:

Στην αρχή, δηλαδή αφού κάθησε χρόνο στη Σάντα Κλάρα είδαμε πως με το κάθε πράμα που έβλεπε, αποτυπώνονταν και στο νου του η λέξη που φανέρωνε το πράμα, δίχως μάλιστα και να νοιώγει το στόμα του. Σαν περπατούσε [...] το νερό, τα φρούτα, την Αμμουδιά [...] κι όλα τάλλα, δεν τα νομάτιζε με τόνομά τους, άμα που τα συλλογιούνταν ή που τα θωρούσε·έλεγε τα διάφορα ονόματα μόλις από μέσα του. Οι λέξεις όμως αφτές είτανε λίγες, λίγα και τα πράματα που είχε τριγύρω του· τα ίδια πάντα. Ο κύκλος του περιορισμένος· περιορισμένο και το λεξιλόγι του. Ωστόσο μιλούσε ακόμα σε κείνον τον καιρό [...] Κατόπι πια όρεξη να λαλή δεν είχε [...] Τι να μιλήσει; Λίγο λίγο, σαν έβλεπε τα πράματα, οι λέξεις που τα φανερώνανε δε βγάζανε στο στόμα του πια κανένανε αντίλαλο (209).



There are three distinct identities in the story, two definite ones and one in a state of flux. The definite ones are the identity of a human being, personified by Myriella, and of a non-human, represented by the she-goat, while Yannis's identity is the one that fluctuates from one type to the other. Myriella's ability to speak defines her, in Yannis's mind, as human: "Τώρα, που άκουσε άθρωπο να λαλή, τον πήρε φόβος, κατάλαβε τη διαφορά. Βρέθηκε αμέσως στο ποδάρι. Σηκώθηκε τότε η κόρη, αποφασισμένη, τρανή. Όχι ! όχι! ζωο δεν ήταν αφτή· αφτή δεν του έμοιαζε [...]" (225). The goat, on the other hand, irrespective of its other characteristics, was not capable of speaking; as a result it was an animal. Yannis experiences the differences between the two states and comes to an understanding of his own status: "η κόρη λαλούσε· αφτός σώπαινε, όπως και τα ζα του· ζω το λοιπό θάτανε κι ο ίδιος" (226).

Even though there are other forms of communication in the narrative, speech is the predominant means of communication between different agents. Initially, Yannis starts talking to himself, answering the questions of his fellow sailors, which were addressed to him when they left him on the island. This pseudo-communication takes place after a time lapse of several hours as the narrator wanted to emphasise that the main character was not a very sociable person: "Ο Γιάννης τώρα που δεν τους έβλεπε, άρχισε να λαλή με τους συντρόφους, και νάλεγε πως μονολογούσε, άδικα θα τόλεγε, επειδή αφτός αποκρίνονται ίσια ίσια στα λόγια που του αράδιαζαν εκείνοι [...]" (56). In the process of discovering the island, he either continues to talk to his old companions, imagining that they are watching him from a distance, or he talks to himself as, at that time, he had no other company but himself.<sup>18</sup> As the narration progresses and the character gets deeper into the reality of living alone on the island,

<sup>18</sup>If we notice his words, however, it becomes clear that he is talking to the accommodating readers, whom, in that way, the author makes participate actively in the story.

he stops communicating. Certainly, it is understood that the author continues to speak to his readers, but there are parts where Yannis's thoughts are expressed aloud, in free direct speech, and it is as if readers hear his voice: “– Ορίστε και νερό! Τι κάθουμαι και παραπονιέμαι!” (64). Perhaps in this way the character becomes more alive, and to this can be attributed also the success of the novel, which managed to capture a significant readership compared to the rest of the author's Greek novels (Stergiopoulos 1986: 140-1).

Finally, there is an episode in which dialogue returns to the narration, but this is the type of communication which can never achieve its aims, because the people Yannis converses with are dead; disillusioned, he starts hearing voices in his head and thinks that he talks with his old companions, who had drowned. Thus Yannis speaks with different voices, adopting different stances, trying to reassure himself:

Ακουγες μάλιστα και κάτι κουβέντες, όσο προχωρούσε, σα να μιλούσανε δυο ή και περισσότεροι νομάτοι μαζί: Μπρε μωρέ, Γιάννη, εδώ είσαι τώρα; – Εδώ είμαι και βέβαια! – Πως μας τα κατάφερες; Μαργιόλος πούσαι και δεν έλεγες τίποτις! – Αμ’ τι θαρρούσατε, πως θα καθήσω να γίνω ζώο εκεί κάτω; – Εμείς ερχόμεστα να σε μπαρκάρουμε, να σε πάμε στην πατρίδα! – Και σας πλάκωσε η φουρτούνα! Μα μπράβο σας! – Ο Χάρος έχει αλησμονιά· σύχασε την καρδιά σου. – Ήσυχ’ είναι η καρδούλα μου· στον Άδη πως τα πάτε; [...] (175).

The dialogue with the dead sailors, the last human company Yannis had experienced, is still a sign of resistance to his transformation. The companions describe the power of Charon and suggest that living on Yannis's island is like being dead, but Yannis is determined to beat Charon: “Ο Χάρος γίνεται Νησί και ζωντανό σε θάφτει. – Εγώ θα

μείνω στο Νησί, το Χάρο να νικήσω” (176).<sup>19</sup> However, even though what is communicated through the dead companions is essential in that it allows Yannis’s intentions to be aired, there is no new information for readers. The importance of this exchange lies in the use of language. By including this example of a folk song, Psycharis wants readers to see his work in the same context as the folk songs.

This is the last incident where the author makes Yannis speak out loud. After the dialogue with the dead he falls silent, and the narrator undertakes to communicate to readers all the activities and the thoughts of the character. Yannis stops speaking at the end of the third year of his exile, and thereafter he only utters some screams when he accompanies the wild animals. In that respect, the author faithfully follows the evolution in the behaviour of the real castaway, Alexander Selkirk: “Ο Αλέξανδρος ο Σελκίρκης, που είναι αληθινό πρόσωπο κι όχι τεχνόπλαστο, σε τεσσάρω χρονώ διάστημα, έγινε βουβός, κι ωστόσο είχε την ίδια συντροφιά που είχε κι ο Γιάννης μας, δηλαδή σκυλιά και κατσίκες. Λοιπόν ακόμη περισσότερο αποξέχασε τη γλώσσα του ο Γιάννης, που και στα ζώα του μιλούσε μόλις κάπου κάπου με κάτι ασυλλάβιστα ξεφωνητά, με κάτι παράξενα βραχνογρουλλίσματα. Μα λεξούλα δεν ξεστόμιζε” (207).<sup>20</sup> Psycharis believed that language was like a living organism, as he explained in his *Essais*: “La formation d’une langue est si j’ose dire, tout interne. L’évolution

<sup>19</sup>Tomadakis relates this part of the narrative, its theme, style, vocabulary and the fifteen-syllable verse, to the late Byzantine poems that refer to the Underworld, and in particular to Bergadis’s poem “Apokopos” as well as to other later folk songs. It is true that the similarity is obvious: “[...] διατί στον Άδη τον πικρόν ήλιος ουκ ανατέλλει ουδέ το φέγγος του ουρανού το ξέλαμπρόν του στέλλει. Χρόνος εδώ ου γίνεται, ημέρα ου χωρίζει, αλλά το σκότος τ’ άμετρον τρέχει και ομπρός τανύζει” (Bergadis 1979: 31, v. 449-52). This reference is part of Psycharis’s cultural plan to promote the tradition and language of folk songs as a link to the literature written in the demotic. Indeed, the inclusion of this pseudo-dialogue in simple language between the character and the dead friends, has mainly a metalinguistic function. It serves to emphasise Yannis’s humble roots, as one of the people and the importance of the tradition of folk songs (see also the inclusion of lines from folk songs in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* – Chapter Four).

<sup>20</sup>We should notice the distinction made by the narrator between ‘real’ and ‘fictional’ (αληθινό πρόσωπο κι όχι τεχνόπλαστο). The first one refers to Alexander Selkirk whose story was a document while the second one applies to Robinson Crusoe, who was a fictional character. By association, the narrator wants readers to think of Yannis as a real case, bringing him closer to Selkirk than to Defoe’s character.

du langage se fait d'une façon intime et s'accomplit avant tout dans l'homme, c'est-à-dire dans l'âme et dans les organes" (Psichari 1886: 186n). Language thus follows the speaker's reverse evolution and reinstatement as he rediscovers his human identity and speaks not only with his tongue but with his soul as well. Yannis's reacquaintance with his own language can be read as an allegory of the fact that most Greeks would also have to learn how to use their language properly, abandoning the *katharevousa*. Like Yannis, the Greek people needed to forget about the past and emerge into a new situation, and their cultural regeneration could start through the use of the correct language.

In contrast to Yannis's faculty of speech, which subsides and then is redeveloped, the narrator's vocabulary is very rich and expressive, and this is in accordance with the author's intention of working on the language of the narrative meticulously so that it conveys precisely the ideas and objects described, in a manner faithful to the popular expression. The aim was to prove that the demotic language was capable of expressing even concepts that referred to things that would have been a very distant reality for the Greek readership or to any literary or other concept, without compromising its origins. As is pointed out by the author in his correspondence: "[...] εγώ τόχω αφτό για κλασσικό βιβλίο. Δείχνει θαρρώ πως στη γλώσσα μας όλα μπορείς να τα πης, φιλοσοφικά, ψυχολογικά, ό,τι θέλεις. Με την αγάπη της, με τη δουλειά, γίνονται τα καλύτερα" (Karatzas 1988: 548). Despite the fact that many of these words are created by the author, and were not exactly used by people, they can be described as colloquial because they sounded like colloquialisms. The author researched extensively in order to create this narrative and the correct use of words was one of his main objectives. As he explains in the afterword: "Είναι όμως χαρά και μέθη να γράφει κανείς τη δημοτική μας, την εθνική μας γλώσσα. Τον πλούτο

της. στα δάχτυλά σου τον παίζεις· την κάνεις ό,τι θέλεις. Πιο εφκολλόγιστη, πιο ποιητική και φιλοσοφόθρεφτη συνάμα, δεν πιστέβω να υπάρξει άλλη καμμιά [...]” (315, the emphasis as it is in the text).

The attention to the language of the novel can also be explained by the fact that the plot of the narrative was well known and there were no surprises for readers; the author was forced to make it interesting for them by describing to the best of his ability a familiar story. In a letter to Eftaliotis, where Psycharis discusses some of his ideas about the formation of words and expressions in this novel, he urges his friend to observe, if he is making the ‘fatal’ mistakes of either being too close to the French language or to the *katharevousa*: “ (604) ξεσπάστηκε από την αγκαλιά του. Μήπως και γαλλικίζω; s’est arrachée de?, (605) δίπλα της αμμονδιάς. Ή μήπως καθαρολογώ;” (Karatzas 1988: 534). The author paid a great deal of attention to the language of his novel, in order to be able to convey to his readers all of the information needed in the best possible way and to reaffirm, through his story, the importance of language for a social existence.

## 5. The metafictional strategies as elements of didacticism in the text <sup>21</sup>

The opening of the novel with Dante’s line ‘ed io sol uno’, *Inf.* II, 1 (3), (“and I am just one”) gives the flavour of what this narrative is going to be about. It presents the adventures of a character who is forced to live alone in circumstances very different to those that he had been used to, but it is also an exercise in fiction writing, because the activity of writing is also, usually, a battle that the writer has to go

<sup>21</sup>I propose to read *Ζωή κι Αγάπη* also as a metafictional narrative following a similar approach to Defoe’s novel. “In a very real way, *Robinson Crusoe* is a tale of telling. The things Crusoe does on the island are an emblem for the things the writer does with space and time in the realistic novel [...]” (Seidel 1991: 77). Psycharis comments on his own narration in an attempt to communicate with readers and be understood, much as the character tries to make his life bearable on the island.

through on his own. This becomes apparent through the various comments or devices which direct the emphasis to the process of writing rather than the story itself. For example, as mentioned above, Yannis, seems to be aware of the role he must play in the narrative. In the beginning of the novel, he communicates with the readers, and talks to himself. He knows that his actions must appear plausible to readers, according to the circumstances he is in; therefore, he appears to be conscious of the way he behaves and addresses the readers in a self-deprecating manner: “τι μουρλός που είμαι, μωρέ σεις, και θα με πάρετε τώρα στο ψιλό” (62). In that way, two different worlds and processes are brought together: the fictional world of the exotic island, and the real activity of reading fiction. This is an interesting technique similar to the more usual one of breaking the conventions of verisimilitude by making the narrator address the readers directly.

Similar to this approach of “in-and-out-of text” is the narrator’s habit of addressing the ‘poet’, who can be interpreted either as Defoe as author or his narrator or as the author of this novel (*Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά*), as can be seen in the following extract: “[...] εξόν αν το κάμης ξεπίτηδες, και κάθε φορά που έχει ανάγκη από τίποτις ο ερημίτης σου, ερθής του λόγου σου, ο ποιητής, και του το φέρης με την τέχνη σου, πολλαπλασιάζοντας τα επεισόδια και τις φαντασίες. Μα τότες η ερμιά πάβει ερμιά να είναι” (168). In the first case the narrator suggests that Defoe’s approach is not convincing. In the second it is an indication of the self-referential character of the text. Another instance of the same self-referential mode of writing is the author’s dialogue with himself regarding the process of writing, when he supposedly explains the differences between fiction and reality: “[σ]α γράφει κανείς βιβλία, βάζει μέσα ό,τι θέλει. Μα η ζωή γράφει άλλα, που στο βιβλίο δεν ταπαντάς. Όση όρεξη κι αν έχεις να πης καλημέρα μιας κατσίκας, παίξε γέλασε δεν είναι να πας



να της την πης απάνω σε γκρεμνό [...]" (176-77).<sup>22</sup> With this comment Psycharis suggests through his narrator that complete freedom for the writer in the creative process can be dangerous because it limits the verisimilitude of the story. Furthermore, the imagination of the writer must be restricted according to the requirements of the plot, much as the environment in which he is placed restricts the character's existence in this novel. By using these unorthodox ways of referring to the fictional process, the narrator of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* certainly does little to preserve the verisimilitude that he is defending. However, by addressing himself, as his character does in other parts, Psycharis as author and as narrator reinforces the connection between the character's fate and that of his creator.

The intention of the author/narrator, and even of the character, to the extent that the latter leaves the confines of the story to address the readers, is the same. The aim of these playful references to the process of writing fiction and what it means is to take the readers to the other side. This is done not only to make them actively join in the process of creating the character, the setting and the plot, but also, basically, to make them trust the narrator, so that the latter is able to get his message(s) across successfully. This is indicated by the way the narrator sometimes uses the first person plural, identifying completely with his character's view and activities: "Χριστέ και Παναγιά, ιδού και το καράβι μας!" (169), while at other times, the narrator speaks as part of a group, in order to make the readers join in the process as well, as one can infer from the title of one chapter: "Ταξιδέβουμε" (164) (which was "Ταξιδέβει" in one of the initial manuscripts, 3893, 1902, chapter I'(10), see also p. 66 of the novel). The aim is to create an empathy with readers or in other words, to form a community, where the 'I' of the writer – like that of the character – would mean nothing on its

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<sup>22</sup>The author refers to his own activity and to that of other writers, extending his didacticism to include himself.

own, unless it is accepted and shared by the readers (who are the addressees). In this context Yannis's need to carve his name on the bark of a tree, can be understood as an attempt to replicate his existence by creating the illusion of a company.<sup>23</sup>

As has been mentioned already, the character resorts to writing before he ceases to speak. Initially, he writes his name on the tree; later he uses his body to communicate and master the environment in the hope that he will feel less lonely, and that his creations will somehow reproduce himself: “κόντεψε να πιστέψη πως είτανε τώρα δυο νομάτοι στο Νησί, ο ίδιος και το δέφτερο εκείνο το δεν ξέρω τι που του έδειχνε ο καθρέφτης, δηλαδή το έργο το δικό του, ο δρόμος που άνοιξε δίχως να το θέλη” (104).<sup>24</sup> As the narrative shows, in real life, humans always require the company of others to be able to understand themselves better. The author, on the other hand, requires readers on his side, following his thinking, in order to achieve his objectives as an educator. Furthermore, this becomes obvious due to the fact that the author has a multiple hidden presence in the narrative which cannot pass unnoticed. We can recognise him in the role of the narrator, in the role of the captain, who decides to carry out an experiment, and significantly, in the role of the educator of the novel, which is assigned to the female character, Myriella.<sup>25</sup> Myriella finds her purpose in the novel, because she can teach Yannis how to speak again, and help him rediscover his human self. Similarly, Psycharis believes that he teaches his Greek compatriots with his prose. In that way, Myriella and Yannis like Psycharis and his

<sup>23</sup> As Constandoulaki-Chantzou points out in her analysis of the French version: “[...] il grava son nom [...] il se senti ainsi moins seul. Il dédoublait ainsi, il affirmait son existence dans le vide de la nature” (1981: 261).

<sup>24</sup> We must notice also that the last name of the character is a duplication of the first one (Yannis Petroyannis).

<sup>25</sup> It cannot not be accidental that Myriella's origins are similar to Psycharis's: she was from Venice with a Greek mother; Psycharis, on the other hand, had a Greek father and a mother with Venetian origins. Myriella's mother had died when she was young as had Psycharis's. She was well educated and elegant, totally the opposite of the ordinary sailor, a typical member of a civilised society, like the author himself.

readers acquire their true identities and potential, reinforcing the message of the novel that the solitary existence is not possible.<sup>26</sup>

Myriella, like Psycharis the author-instructor, can deliver Yannis and the readers from his/their unfavourable conditions; slowly, with patience and not without problems, these two will finally understand each other and fall in love. This could be the ideal result for the didactic process, a total understanding and union between the one pole, the author-instructor, and the other, his Greek readers. In the end, the author allows his optimism to overcome the loneliness of the writer: Yannis and Myriella will end up in Mas-a-fuera and will have the company of their baby and other people: “Φαντάζεται πια ο καθένας τη χαρά τους. Πολύ τους άρεζε και η συντροφιά όπου μεγάλωνε το μωρό τους, όπου ξάνοιγε η ζωή τους, γιατί πλήθαινε η συντροφιά μέρα την ημέρα” (302). With this allegorical reference, the dictum that initiates the novel, ‘ed io sol uno’, is altered, as the adventures of the solitary writer will finally bring closer to him, thanks to his perseverance, the ‘other’ side, the company of people who will espouse his views.

## Conclusion

In this novel, the author explores the effects of the solitary existence on the individual and concludes that it is unbearable for human beings to live alone, but also that strong survival instincts guide them into alternative modes of existence because life is a powerful force. Life outside society forces man to understand his nature and to face up to its limitations. A fundamental change in human nature is, however, reversible, and the power of love between human beings allows that nature to be

<sup>26</sup>See also the afterword, where the author mentions that, “[...] το εγώ είναι παραμύθι. Ο εγωισμός είναι κούφια λέξη. Το εγώ δίχως το εσύ νόημα δεν έχει. Ξέρεις πως υπάρχεις, πως είσαι, γιατί με βλέπεις εμένα που είμαι και που υπάρχω. Όρος του εγωισμού ο ετερισμός, και πρώτη του αρχή” (305).

restored to its original state. In Psycharis's narrative the power of love replaces religion, which helped the character of Defoe's novel in his activities. Psycharis would express the same view about a more tangible physical form of religion exemplified in the love between two people in his novel *Αγνή* (1913), as will be discussed in Chapter Eight. In that respect he follows some of the ideas in Defoe's novel but tries to suggest alternative ways of coping with the problems the characters are facing. The author also stresses the importance of language for a social existence, since language is the faculty that distinguishes humans from non-humans, and he refers implicitly to the language question in Greece and the importance of the vernacular.

Daniel Defoe's novel had been one of the most successful and popular books in literary history, with many editions and imitations. Psycharis must have been hoping for a similarly favourable reception from Greek readers, due to the story's appeal. Indeed, it seems that in this novel at least, the author achieved his purpose, his novel was appreciated and read with interest and he was also able to promote his views on human nature and the importance of language, and in particular of Greek language, to his readers.

## CHAPTER SIX

## PSYCHARIS'S PROVOCATIVE WRITING

In this chapter I have included Psycharis's novels that have not been published in book form. Two of these *H Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907) and *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921), were serialised in *Noumas*, while the third, *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914), remained unpublished. However, it is interesting that the latter is mentioned on the inside cover of the French novel *Typesses* (1923), as if it had been published in Greek. It is referred to in a separate section, following the "Ouvrages en Grec moderne", under the title: "Ultérieurement: *Le Triomphe de la Douleur et de l'Amour* (en grec moderne), roman". I consider these novels examples of Psycharis's provocative and lurid writing for different reasons in each case. In all three novels the author's writing transgresses the social and literary conventions, either challenging or enticing the reader, and therefore it is both didactic and provocative.

*H Άρρωστη Δούλα* presents as fictional material the culmination of the illness of a young servant girl. Not only the theme, but also the detailed descriptions of the problems suffered by the main character are unusual in writing of the period. The novel provoked reactions – even from close friends of the author – as to its suitability for publication and presentation to the general public. The didacticism in this novel consists mainly in presenting to the public Psycharis's views on literature, according to which, any material that is carefully presented by the author is suitable for fiction. Furthermore, the narrative also suggests that the acceptance of truth even when it brings people into conflict with their own convictions is the most courageous attitude in life and in fiction.

*Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* comprises two separate extended novellas, which can be considered as a novel. In any case, this is how the author refers to it, once again on the inside flap of the book jacket of *Typesses*, which contains a bibliography of his work: *Les Deux Roses de la Mort*, roman (1914) – the date is incorrect. The two novellas have as their main theme the love of two young people who were not destined to be together. My suggestion is that in this case, Psycharis was writing about his own unsuitable love affair with Olga Valaoritis, the daughter of the poet Aristotelis Valaoritis, as he himself attests in the prologue of the novel. Olga committed suicide as a result of this unfortunate relationship with Psycharis, a fact which caused guilt in the author. This quasi-apologetic, quasi-courageous attitude of the author reflects his belief in frankness in life and in fiction, and is, moreover, an indication of his advanced thinking, ahead of the conventions of his time. Therefore, in *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* the provocative writing is a result of the author's belief in frankness.

Finally, the unpublished and hitherto unknown novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* contains provocative material. It presents various sexual encounters attributed to the narrator and his brother, recounted by the latter to the former through his diary, and it would have caused controversy, without doubt, had it been published. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the novels, and discuss to what extent the provocative and lurid writing is part of the didacticism of the texts or what other purposes it serves.

### 1. *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα*

Psycharis's novel *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα* caused a great deal of controversy because of its subject and the way the author organised and presented his material.



The novel presents the fluctuations in health of a young servant in a detailed and crude manner. It is apparent that Psycharis tried to follow the proclamations of Zola about the role of literature and to create a naturalistic Greek novel, but the result lacked the aesthetic satisfaction expected from a literary work. The novel was deemed too long and tiring by Pallis and Eftaliotis, who believed that its theme would not appeal to readers. Pallis, who supported the publication of *Noumas* financially, threatened to withdraw his financial support if Psycharis published his *Αρρώστη Δούλα* there. This caused friction between the three friends Pallis, Eftaliotis, and Psycharis – Eftaliotis being in the middle between the other two (see letters exchanged in Karatzas 1988: 571-89). As is pointed out by Psycharis to Eftaliotis: “Όσο γι’ αυτό που λες πως ξαιτίας ενός ρομάντζου δικού μου θα πάη ο Πάλλης να τραβηχτή από το Νουμά, θαρρώ τόντις πως ο φόβος σου δεν έχει το λόγο του και δεν μπορεί νάχη. Θάτανε τόσο άτοπο να τραβιότανε ο Πάλλης, γιατί δημοσιέβω εγώ ρομάντζο στο Νουμά [...]” (ibid: 571). However, the publication undoubtedly caused friction in their relations.

The manuscript gives the date of writing as 1905-1906; the serial publication in *Noumas* started on 1st January 1907 and ended on 25th November 1907, with a note at the end of the serialisation, stating that the writing of the novel had started on 16th April 1905 and had ended on 18th September 1906. The prologue to the novel was published in *Noumas* on 24th December 1906, 227: 1-2.

Psycharis was not alone at the time in his attempts to create a naturalistic novel. After the flowering of the naturalistic novel in France, the method of investigation and objective writing combined with the general concept of presenting social issues, had an impact on the type of literature that was written in Europe and elsewhere. It is, therefore, important to present the naturalistic principles that can be

detected in Psycharis's novel. Naturalism, as mentioned in Chapter Five, aimed to invest fiction with the objectivity of scientific writing. The four principal components of Zola's literary theory, to which the name Naturalism applied were heredity, milieu, historical moment and experimentation (Furst & Skrine 1971: 8). According to the ideology of Naturalism, the natural sciences are not distinguished from the humanities with regard to their methodology and their aims. In both these cognitive fields, the observation of the physical and the social environment and the classification of findings are intended to expand people's knowledge of the world and offer new solutions to their problems (see Pateridou 2002: 417). "In addition to its scientific pretensions, naturalism [...] differed from realism in the attention it focused on the lower classes [...] and the baser aspects of life (including incest, insanity, and disease)" (Berg-Martin 1992: 13). It was as a result of overemphasising the above aspects that Naturalism came to be considered, eventually, unsuitable for literary writing because of its lack of diversity, despite its claims to represent life faithfully (Vitti 1991: 96). It succeeded, however, in suggesting, albeit for a short period, that no subjects were inappropriate for literature.

Elements of Zola's literary theory referring to the primacy of scientific methods were presented in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, but it is mainly in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904) (see Chapter Five), and in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα*, that Psycharis attempts consciously to apply the theoretical model suggested by Zola. Furthermore, *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* was written only shortly after *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, and it is reasonable to expect some consistency in the author's aims and method of writing. In the manuscript, donated with the rest of Psycharis's library to Emmanuel Benakis – now part of the Benaki Library in Athens – the novel is entitled: *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα και το Καλό το Κοριτσάκι*, instead of the title adopted by Noumas, *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα*,

and there is a dedication to his ‘doctor-friend Yannis Siotis’.<sup>1</sup> In the preface, Psycharis explained that his aim was to create a scientific novel but he also confided that perhaps this was an unattainable ambition:

Να μην τα μασούμε, βγήκα να κάμω ρομάντζο επιστημονικό. Ρομάντζα επιστημονικά δεν έχει. Έχει δηλαδή ρομάντζα όπου ο ρομαντζιέρος πήγε και ξεσκάλισε βιβλία επιστημονικά, έπειτα όσα έμαθε σου τα κουβαλεί στο βιβλίο του και φαρδιά πλατιά σου τα καταστρώννει, ναπορήσης με τη σοφία του. Είναι αντιγραφή. Επιστήμη δεν είναι. Η επιστήμη όπως κι αν το γυρίσης, βάση της έχει κάποια πρωτοτυπία· έρχεσαι και μας λες πράματα που μοναχός σου τα παρατήρησες, μας βγάζεις στη μέση κανένα ντοκουμέντο καινούριο. Τότες η δουλειά σου καθαυτό επιστημονική. Βρέθηκα σε περίπτωση, σπαραχτική και ιδιαίτερη, όπου ίδια η ζωή μου έβαλε στα χέρια, που να πης, το καινούριο το ντοκουμέντο, καθώς λέγαμε. Το ντοκουμέντο έγινε βιβλίο. Παρατήρησα, παρακολούθησα μια δεινή αρρώστια και σου τα δηγούμαι όπως την παρατήρησα κι όπως ξετυλίχτηκε στα μάτια μου (1905-6: β’).

As becomes apparent, the author believed that the original document can be classified as scientific. We can contrast these views, in particular the term ‘ρομάντζο επιστημονικό’, with Zola’s concept of the *Roman experimental*, where he claims that the novelist is an observer and an experimenter (Zola 1971: 63-4), a further indication of the influence of Naturalism on Psycharis. The author also expressed the view in the same preface, however, that literary creation requires more than objective documentation: “Είναι όμως κι αναντίλεχτο πως με απλό ντοκουμέντο η τέχνη δεν τα βγάζει πέρα, ρομάντζο δε γίνεται. Λοιπόν έβαλα και μια υφή, ένα πλέξιμο” (ibid: γ’).<sup>2</sup>

That admission suggests the difficulties inherent in the naturalist movement’s aims in

<sup>1</sup>Psycharis’s *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα και το Καλό το Κοριτσάκι* (1905-1906), manuscript no. 6786.

<sup>2</sup>Elsewhere Psycharis had argued that the imaginative writer should use popular themes from other books or stories that he/she had heard in order to recreate his/her own narratives (see afterword to *Ζωή κι Αγάπη*, Psycharis 1991: 332). We notice a contradiction here with his previous statement about originality and avoidance of copying. There seem to be, then, two modes of writing that are not compatible but which can both be classified as literature, according to the author’s views; the one is the scientific writing, based on the documentation of truth, and the other is based on the art of the narration, whether the theme is new and original or not. Psycharis must have thought extensively about the art of narration, since in most of his novels there are the relevant references and suggestions regarding this issue.

respect of literature. On the one hand the naturalist writer aimed to be objective and to document real events faithfully. On the other, it was necessary to intervene in order to create a fictional narrative because art cannot be based only on documentation. Unable or perhaps unwilling to define his position exactly, the author admitted in the preface that he might not have succeeded in writing a naturalistic novel. However, *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα* follows closely the ideas and techniques that had developed in literature as a result of Zola's theoretical model. Psycharis's novel starts with an idea (to write a scientific novel) and he explains in the beginning of the novel how he defines the scientific aspect of literature; he then proceeds with the writing which exhibits naturalistic elements, as I will explain below. The novel is a detailed description – mostly recorded with objectivity, but not always – of the main character's misfortunes.

The main character is a poor young girl called Katinoula (also called Katrinik, since the family was living in France), who after a very difficult childhood was fortunate enough to find employment in the house of professor Andreas Olpieris (“γαλλικά Olpier”) (1907 (1/1): 2).<sup>3</sup> Andreas lived with his wife and two children in France and Katinoula developed a very good relationship with her employers. The narrator explains that the professor was working very hard on his essays about ancient Greek texts and had a talent for depicting things of the past in such a way that one felt ‘Antiquity’ close to everyday life: “ [...] ο κ. Α. Ολπιέρης είχε τρόπο δικό του να σου τα παρασταίνει τα πράματα, να σου μιλή για την αρχαιότητα, σα να σου μιλούσε για τίποτις που το είδες στα μάτια σου εψές ή προψές. Τον άκουγες και καταλάβαινες αμέσως πως την αγαπούσε με την καρδιά του, για τούτο και την έννοιωθε” (1/1: 3).<sup>4</sup> Katinoula would often stand around after having served dinner to the family, in order

<sup>3</sup> All references to the novel are from the publication in *Noumas*, and henceforth the exact date and the page number of the issue will be given in parenthesis.

<sup>4</sup> This is an important point to which I will refer below.

to listen to the professor explaining the stories from the ancient texts that he was studying.

When Olia, Andreas's wife fell ill, Katinoula nursed her and looked after her in her last moments. Olia made her promise that she would look after her little daughter Myriella, and keeping her promise, Katinoula became like a second mother to the little girl. However, Katinoula also became very ill and her increasingly failing health was partly the result of the inaccurate diagnoses of the doctors who looked after her. Contributing to the deterioration of her health was her bad psychological state because of the arguments with her brother and his wife, who was also a servant in the Olpieris house, but very jealous of Katinoula's closeness to the family. Most of the incidents in the plot of the novel involve describing Katinoula's bad health, her visits to doctors, her operations, her minor recoveries and then relapses and the interest of the professor in the state of her health. Andreas Olpieris follows the progress of her health with compassion. As it happened, because he had been very busy with his work, he had been unable to look after his wife when she had been very ill and felt very guilty for failing to be with her in her last moments. In order to avoid making the same mistake again, he tried to look after the faithful servant who had been like a member of the family. The family, however, had to endure not only Katinoula's illness but also health problems of other family members. In the end, despite all her terrible ordeals, the faithful servant survives even her employer, and manages to fulfil her promise to her mistress and look after the girl, ensuring her happiness in marriage.

In order to write a Greek scientific novel, Psycharis took inspiration from a real-life incident, the illness of an acquaintance, as he explained in the preface to the manuscript. He mentioned this case also in the prologue to his *Ρόδα και Μήλα Γ'* in

his 'Apologia' about his linguistic views: "Δεν είχα κανένα σκοπό να θυμώσω, [...] άρχισα να γράφω τον πρόλογό μου στην κάμαρα μιας φτωχής άρρωστης [...]" (1906b: 27). It is possible that the person who inspired the narrative was a servant in his own house, since in one of his letters to Eftaliotis, he gave the following information that can be paralleled in the story of the novel:

Δεν ξέρεις τις πίκρες μας και δεν μπορείς να καταλάβεις γιατί σου γράφω από το Μπρέστι. Δυο μήνες τώρα και παραπάνω που η καημένη η Γιώαννα είναι άρρωστη, πολύ άρρωστη. Και ξέρεις πόσο την αγαπούμε· ξέρεις τι αφοσιωμένη που μας είναι· ξέρεις πως μας ανάθρεψε όλα μας τα παιδιά [...] Φαντάσου λοιπόν πως οι γιατροί του Παρισιού – οι καλύτεροι – γελάστηκαν και δεν τη διαγνώστεψαν όπως έπρεπε. Ήρθαμε στην εξοχή, φωνάξαμε του Λαννιονιού το γιατρό. Και τάννιωσε όλα. Την έφερα λοιπόν εδώ, αδερφέ, να της κάμουν εγχείρηση. Κ' έγινε. Και πέτυχε. Της βγάλανε την περασμένη τη δεφτέρα, δηλαδή προπροχτές, όλο της το αριστερό το νεφρί [...] (Karatzas 1988: 540).<sup>5</sup>

In any case, it seems that whoever this person was, her health problems impelled Psycharis to record her unfortunate adventures and present his observations as a narrative that would describe in detail and with objectivity all the problems encountered by the patient and the remedies proposed to rectify them. The novel exemplifies the author's belief that life should be portrayed in all its details without any attempt to make things less ugly and disturbing.

With regard to the naturalistic elements, Psycharis aims to convey the workings of heredity, milieu, and moment in relation to the development of his characters. Firstly, his choice of character and theme, a young servant from a low, marginal class, and the depiction of her life, are typical of the naturalists' preferred subjects. The father of the girl is also portrayed as a useless alcoholic (see 7/1: 4-5)

<sup>5</sup>This information is also provided in Eftaliotis's letter to Petros Vlastos: "Έγραψα του Ψυχάρη πως δεν έλαβες γράμμα του και πως καιρός του είναι να σε θυμηθή, αφού δε σε αγαπά και τόσο. Μα είχε κι αφτός βάσανα – άμε κ' έλα με αρρώστους – κ' υποθέτω αυτός ήταν ο λόγος. Ο άρρωστος είτανε μια τους οικογενειακή δούλα Jeanne, που την έχουνε σαν παιδί τους! Γαλλο-ρωμαίικα πράματα". The letter is dated 18.9.1904 (Karatzas 1985: 162).



and the brother is a peasant, with basic instincts, easily influenced by his wife and with a tendency towards negative behaviour and actions: “Ο Πέτρος είτανε δούλος αφωσιωμένος κι αγαπούσε ταφεντικά του. Φοβότανε κι όλες τον κ. Ολπιέρη όπως τα ζώα φοβούνται χωρίς να το ξέρουνε γιατί, από σέβας τον ανώτερό τους (28/1: 7).<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, the role of heredity is brought to the foreground in the way the family doctor treats Katinoula's case, dismissing her illness as a hereditary condition: “[α]τταβισμός, προγονικές κληρονομημένες αρρώστιες, τι τα θέλεις; Να, δε βλέπεις τον αδερφό της;” (4/2: 5). It seems that the author wants also to castigate the prejudices against the lower social classes. Furthermore, in order to expose the prejudices of the period, he multiplies his message by presenting similar examples of illnesses in the same environment. Most of the characters in the novel get ill at one point or another, not only the main ill person Katinoula, but also Olia before her, who dies in the latter's arms, Petros, Katinoula's brother, Anna, the sister of Andreas Olpieri, and at the end Andreas himself, who dies before his servant.<sup>7</sup> The author also discusses the influence of the environment on Katinoula's upbringing and on that of her brother, and implies that circumstances can play an important role in people's development, usually an unfavourable one.

With regard to the third element, the historical or defining moment, the narrator explains that in Katinoula's case, her problems escalated because of the initial incorrect diagnosis she received from the family doctor, who had erroneously suggested a problem in the urinary tract, instead of the real problem, which was a kidney infection. The initial mistake proved decisive as it delayed her cure, enabling

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<sup>6</sup>Katinoula's reaction to her illness is also described by the narrator by using the expression that she was an animal: “Βοούσε, βοούσε δυνατά, βοούσε με φοβέρες ταμελημένο, το παραριχμένο, το πληγωμένο, ταγριεμένο, ταθρόπινο το ζώο, που λαχταρούσε για ζωή” (4/2: 7).

<sup>7</sup>It is interesting that Psycharis himself had an operation when he was in the last stages of writing the novel, and he explained to his friend Eftaliotis that he had felt as if he was not going to recover after the operation and would die (Karatzas 1988: 570).

the disease to spread further, and thus the author to continue with the depiction of the girl's unfortunate adventures.

Finally, the author used observation and objectivity and as a case in point, he discussed this approach in the narrative, explaining to readers that this should be the way of dealing with all situations in life. As is pointed out in the novel the first step in solving a problem is to understand it by describing it properly: “Σα δούνε από πληγή κρύφια ή φανερή αίμα να στάζει, θα το λένε όπως τόλεγε ο Φιλοχτήτης, κ’ έτσι από τον πολιτισμό τον περίσσιο κι από την περίσσια την επιστήμη, θα γυρίσουμε πίσω στα χρόνια ταρχαϊκά, μα δε θα φωνάζουμε πια τον πόνο μας γιατί θα μάθουμε να τον κυβερνούμε” (14/1: 8). However, the tendency to generalise and to comment about people is part of Psycharis's overall didacticism, in contrast to Zola's writing which was lacking in generalisations (Berg-Martin 1992: 9). In the course of the general didactic discourse which aims to promote the importance of health in this novel, the narrator analysed what it means to be ill. He suggested that it is a dysfunction and pain either in the soul or in the body. According to the point made in the narrative, if the person who is ill receives some help in their time of need, then there is a possibility of their getting back to a normal state: “Είναι κακές, είναι δεινές αρρώστιες οι νεφροαρρώστιες. Θέλουνε αμέσως περιποίηση και προσοχή. Μια και δεν είναι το νεφρί στη θέση του, μπορείς τα χειρότερα να πάθης, αρκεί να πάθης τίποτις η φούσκα, η αδερφή του νεφριού, που και τα δυό ένα στενό σωληνάρι τα συνεδένει, πες ένα ποταμάκι ανάμεσά τους με ανεβοκατέβατο ρέμα [...]” (14/1: 9).<sup>8</sup> However, Psycharis's writing does not always stay faithful to the tenets of observation and recording of events, and he often makes the narrator intervene in

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<sup>8</sup>Descriptions such as the above are encountered throughout the narrative. Despite the objective writing, the medical information is presented through an exemplary language with metaphors, which gives the impression of attempting to teach. Overall, the descriptions in the narrative are very explicit, in order to emphasise the point that people should not hide the truth, even if it is uncomfortable to explain it.

order to present his messages. Sometimes he even reaches a hasty conclusion that suggests a weakness at analysing things, as in the following extract from the novel which presents the story of two servants: “Σαν έφυγε ταντρόγυνο, ανακαλύφτηκε πως κλέψανε κάμποσα κ’ οι δυό τους. Εννοείται. Το ήξερε η δύστυχη γυναίκα πως αδύνατο να μείνουνε πολή καιρό στο ίδιο σπίτι, αφού αργά νωρίς θάβγαινε στη μέση του αντρός της ο αλκολισμός, και μάζωνε μάζωνε χρήματα για να ζήση. Ποιος φταίει; Εκείνος ή εμείς; Κανένας. Η ζωή. Και πρέπει ναλλάξη” (13/5: 6).

The connection of illness with literature has some affinity also with Zola’s conviction that the writer is like a doctor, and that the work of the literary writer is similar to that of the physician.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, the dedication of the novel is to Yannis Siotis who was a doctor and the references in the novel to *Philoctetes* emphasise the art of Sophocles in the writing of tragedy, as if using the skills of a medical doctor: “Λες κι ο Σοφοκλής, στα παθήματα του αρρώστου, παρατήρησε ως και τα παραμικρά με γιατρού παρατηρητικότητα [...]” (14/1: 4).<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, objectivity is also considered relevant in diagnosing problems with the mentality of the Greek people. As the author had explained in the prologue, the issue of health was of primary importance, and he considered it a metaphor for the nation (Psycharis 1905-6: δ’). In the introduction of *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, he also claimed that the Greek characteristic of losing faith quickly is almost like an illness which can be corrected with time: “[...] Βάση της γιατρικής η διαγνωστική. Μα η αρρώστια η δική μας είναι αρρώστια το

<sup>9</sup>“Je n’aurai à faire ici qu’un travail d’adaptation [...]” explains Zola in his introduction to *Le Roman Expérimental* (1880), and he goes on to say that the experimental method had been analysed by Claude Bernard in his *Introduction à l’Étude de la Médecine Expérimentale*: “Ce livre d’un savant dont l’autorité est décisive, va me servir de base solide. Je trouverai là toute la question traitée [...] je compte sur tous les points, me retrancher derrière Claude Bernard. Le plus souvent, il me suffira de remplacer le mot ‘médecin’ par le mot ‘romancier’, pour rendre ma pensée claire et lui apporter la rigueur d’une vérité scientifique” (Zola 1928: 10). A very favourable analogy at the time, the connection between writer and medical doctor, was not accepted however without criticism: naturalist writers were like the anatomists, often viewed performing their science on a dead body (see A. Yannopoulos’s *Επιστολιμαία Διατριβή*, in Mastrodimitris 1985: 250).

<sup>10</sup>Furthermore, Psycharis had also expressed in *Το Ταξίδι μου* his admiration for Sophocles’ art stating that he was the greatest of all and his poetry was as powerful as fire itself (Psycharis 1993: 161).

κάτου κάτω που γιατρό δε θέλει. Ο γιατρός της τουλάχιστο δεν είναι στο χέρι μας ο γιατρός της είναι ο καιρός. Σήμερα βρισκόμαστε σε μιαν εποχή της ζωής μας, εννοώ της εθνικής μας ζωής, που μπορεί να την πούμε μου φαίνεται πρόσκαιρη και μεταβατική [...]" (Psycharis 1903a: κδ').

Apart from stressing the importance of health for the people and the nation, Psycharis's aim in writing this novel was to challenge the conceptions of the period regarding the definition and role of literature. He wanted to prove that there was no distinction between admissible and unacceptable subjects for literature and, that on the contrary, everything depended on the way that the author depicted the subject and the reasons behind his/her choices. As he explained in the beginning of the novel, in his usual favourite practice of reflecting about the role of literature, and what literary writing consisted of: "Δεν υπάρχει πράμα στον κόσμο, δεν υπάρχει θέμα είτε της επιστήμης είτε της φιλολογίας, που να μη βγη πρωτότυπο, φτάνει πρωτότυπα να το κοιτάξης, δηλαδή να το κοιτάξης κατεφτείας με το νου το δικό σου και με τη δική σου την ψυχή. Αμέσως το ξανανιώνεις" (14/1: 5). Psycharis's objective was to promote the importance of adopting an attitude of frankness in leading one's life as well. As the narrator suggests in the novel, if people face up to their problems with honesty and courage, without feeling ashamed, even in the case of uncomfortable issues such as bodily ill health, then this will help the progress of mankind overall. Consequently, the author views his own contribution through this text, as having a wider influence on people:

Μυστικά πράματα δε θάναι τα πράματα της υγιεινής. Ο καθένας θα ξέρη όσα σήμερις μήτε υποψιάζεται, δηλαδή τα στοιχειώδη και αναγκαία. Τα φυσικά θα του φαίνονται φυσικά, όχι της ντροπής. Ντροπή δε θα το νομίζουν να ζη ο καθένας, και για να μπορέση να ζη, θα καταλάβουνε πως πρέπει να βλέπη ξέθαρρα την πλάση και τα πλάσματα όπως είναι. Θα ξυπνήση στα σπλάχνα μας δυνατά το ψυχόρμητο της στεργοζωίας [...] [δ]ε θα φοβούνται να μιλούνε με

απλότητα για τα καθέκαστα της υγείας και της αρρώστιας  
(14/1: 8).

The conception of this novel was both original and groundbreaking for its time. The emphasis was centred on the notion that everything can be discussed freely and openly and even transformed creatively into literature. This served Psycharis's didactic aims: firstly, to stress the importance of health for all members of a community, and secondly, to challenge the way intellectuals viewed the role of literature. In that respect, Psycharis anticipated recent attempts to discuss the complications of health problems in a literary context. A case in point is the work of Hervé Guibert, an AIDS sufferer, who had written about the progress of his disease and his responses to it in *Le Protocol Compassionnel* (1991) and *CytomégaloVirus: journal d'hospitalisation* (1992), in such a way that the dissection of the body and its function resembled the process of writing (Forbes & Kelly 1995: 206). In Guibert's writing the idea that the body is a laboratory recurs repeatedly in the text, something which can also be said for some descriptions in Psycharis's novel: "Του κατέβηκε ξαφνικά μια ιδέα. Να σφαλοίξη την πληγή! Γιατί να μη γλυτώσουνε κι απ' αφτόνε τον μπελά; [...] Ο Αντρέας, όταν άκουσε για καινούρια γιατρική και δοκιμάσματα, σα να δυσαρεστήθηκε. Τι τάχα; Μήπως τον έφερνε σπίτι για να δοκιμάζει; Μπας κ' είτανε *anima vilis* η Κατινούλα;" (20/5: 6, the emphasis as it is in the text).<sup>11</sup> It seems that in both these texts, despite the chronological gap between them and the different circumstances that surrounded their writing, the main concern had been to challenge readers' ideas about what were appropriate subjects for literature. In Psycharis's narrative, the writing depended entirely on the course of the illness. In Guibert's case as well, this association had a dramatic poignancy, to cease writing signified not only

<sup>11</sup>In Psycharis's text there is a third person narrator that secures an additional impression of objectivity.

the end of the narrative but also his own physical death. Psycharis seems to be aware of this connection and decides to kill Andreas, who has been observing the course of the servant's illness, at the end, rather than Katinoula, the main character, as one would expect in the light of her health problems, in order to end the narrative and his own observation and writing, but allow, metonymically, his work to continue its existence.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, describing the illness openly and taking it from the personal to the public domain signified a transformation: in *H Arrwστη Δούλα* the illness is turned into a literary text, which reclaims on behalf of its author and the main characters, 'another life', a second chance to life.<sup>13</sup>

Psycharis's third aim, as was the case with the rest of his novels in Greek, was to write a novel in the demotic and to exemplify that the latter could be used to render even medical terminology, which had traditionally been expressed in *katharevousa*: "Καλέ, του λόγου τους φτειάνουνε λέξεις δικές τους, που σου λένε ό,τι τους περάση και δεν κοκκινίζεις. Ωστόσο περίεργο να παίρνουνε την προσοχή τους τέτοιες άνοστες δουλειές, να σου ξετάζουνε το νερό σου! [...] Βάρος προσεγγιστικό [...] Γνωρίσματα φυσικά [...] Η τρίτη σου ξεδιάλυνε και το λεγάμενο" (21/1: 7). Interestingly, he makes his character read her urine analysis (to herself and to readers) trying to understand what it was all about, thinking about the words and using her own colloquial terminology, while the official *katharevousa* text of the medical documents is juxtaposed in the same extract. In addition the narrator gives a 'translation' of parts of the document in his phonetic transcription of demotic: "Κανονικά σημάδια. Το ξεταζούμενο ούρο. Ποσό των 24 ωρώ", instead of "Το

<sup>12</sup>The same desire for the work to continue its existence, to outlive the biological life of its narrator, is expressed also in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (Chapter Seven) and *Αγνή* (Chapter Eight).

<sup>13</sup>"Πριν αρρωστήση όμως η Κατινούλα, ο Αντρέας τόντις άλλο δεν είτανε παρά σοφός: τώρα με την αρρώστια, έγινε άνθρωπος και μπορούσε να καταλάβη τον άνθρωπο, να καταλάβη το Σοφοκλή" (18/11: 6).



εξεταζόμενον ούρον, ποσόν των 24 ωρών”, which would have been the standard expressions. (21/1: 7). The character becomes fascinated by all these new words that describe her condition and make her feel more important: “Της είπα όμως πως α μου βάλουν ένα πισώθετο – να, που έμαθα και τόνομα – θα κοιμηθώ από την κούραση” (14/10: 4-5) (instead of the standard medical term ‘υπόθετο’). The author’s irony is apparent in the double voice of this text (να, που έμαθα και τόνομα) which implies that the terminology in *katharevousa* did not help people understand each other and what was happening to their bodies. It is important to mention also that around that time, Psycharis was working on an article entitled “Sophocle et Hippocrate” (published in *Revue de Philologie* in 1908) which was later included in *Quelques Travaux de Linguistique, de Philologie et de Littérature Helleniques* (1930: 892-935). In this article, Psycharis presents the claim of H. Weil, who argued that for a length of time, in Sophocles’ era and even after, the medical language did not differ at all from the spoken one (ibid: 907). In this way the author wanted to support the claim that there was no need for people to use a different (more formal) language to express medical terminology, as the ancients had shown (see also Kriaras 1992: 19n).

The fact that the novel was written in demotic was used by the author as well to support his creation in the face of the stream of criticism it received for its subject and length:

[τ]ην αλήθεια όλη να πούμε ή να διαλέξουμε μόνο την τέχνη; γιατί παλιό παραμύθι πως η τέχνη κ’ η αλήθεια ένα είναι. Είπα, καλήτερα η αλήθεια· είναι και ντοκουμέντο η *Αρρώστη δούλα*. Το μάκρος, βέβαια. Μα το μάκρος της αλήθειας, τι το κάνεις; δηλαδή το μάκρος της αρρώστιας; Τέτοια βιβλία μια φορά γίνονται στη ζωή ενός συγγραφέα, δεν μπορεί μήτε άλλος να τα ξανακάμη. Ωστε ίσως καλό που έγινε. Δε νομίζεις κιόλας πως κάτι θα πη να υπάρχη στη δημοτική ένα ρομάντζο που το κατηγορούνε

για το μάκρος; έτσι θαρρώ μπορεί νάχω κάποιο δίκιο  
(Karatzas 1988: 588).<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, as has been pointed out above, Psycharis connected in his ideology the simple language of everyday life with an attitude of openness and courage, unlike the concealment and hypocrisy that characterised the use of *katharevousa*. Thus the theme of illness and the way the author proposed to handle it brought to the foreground the interplay between fiction and truth and emphasised how the depiction of truth depended on the correct language used.

Because of the unique subject of the novel, Psycharis wanted to use in his defence and support the authority of ancient Greek texts. He aimed to show to his Greek readership that a modern Greek text could reproduce the ideas and timeless considerations presented in ancient texts like *Φιλοκτήτης*. In that respect, *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* is a prominent example of the author's tendency to place his work within a network of intertextual references, ranging from ancient Greek texts to those of contemporary European writers. This tendency is more than a traditional case of influence; as with his other novels, most notably *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά*, the author attempts to open a dialogue with another text and to use this dialogue in order to promote the values that he believed were required to enrich Greek culture. Thus

<sup>14</sup>The naturalistic writing with the explicit descriptions of anatomy indicated a provocative and innovative approach for the period and the audience to which the novel was addressed. As pointed out above, even Psycharis's close friends had expressed concerns and strong opposition to this novel, arguing that the detailed and long descriptions of medical problems had very little to do with literature but resembled instead an article in a medical journal. The opposition is recorded in Psycharis's correspondence with Eftaliotis in a few letters of the period, in which Pallis's attitude is also discussed (see Karatzas 1988: 575, 579, 582, also Kokolis 1989: 53-54 & notes). Characteristically, Alkis Thrylos includes, in her very unflattering – and perhaps unfair – review of Psycharis's work and life, Pericles Yannopoulos's comment regarding the length and the content of this novel: “Μα εφτάψυχη είναι αυτή η δούλα; Δεν θα πεθάνει τέλος πάντων;” (in Thrylos 1963: 269). It is indicative that Psycharis replied defensively to these reviews, suggesting in a letter to Eftaliotis that the public must have the opportunity to read a literary work and form an opinion before it is condemned: “Το γράμμα σου ωραίο, κ' η γνώμη σου πως η *Άρρωστη δούλα* είναι μακρινή για το Νευμά και πως ίσως βαρεθή ο αναγνώστης τα παθολογικά και χάση την πομονή του, μπορεί να είναι σωστή γνώμη. Είναι και γνώμη δική σου, ώστε μπαίνει πολύ σε λογαριασμό. Μα όπως κι αν είναι, γνώμη ατομική, κ' ένα έργο της τέχνης πρέπει πρώτα πρώτα να βγή στο δημόσιο, το δημόσιο ναποφασίση” (Karatzas 1988: 571).

there are at least two other texts or movements underlying the writing of this novel, the naturalist movement and the Sophoclean tragedies, and they both converge to promote the relevance of ‘truth’ as a necessary element of life as well as of fiction.<sup>15</sup> I have discussed above the naturalistic elements of the narrative. There are also a few references to *Αντιγόνη*, *Ηλέκτρα*, *Τραχίνιαι* in the novel: “[...] ο κ. Καθηγητής Αντρέας Ολπιέρης τέλειωνε μια χωριστή του μελέτη για το *Φιλοκτήτη* κι αρχινούσε άλληνη για την *Ηλέκτρα* του αγαπημένου του Σοφοκλή” (14/1: 9).

The main parallelism in the novel, though, refers to Katinoula’s illness and wounds which are compared to those of Sophocles’ character in the tragedy *Φιλοκτήτης*. Philoctetes was bitten by a snake as he tried to lead the Greeks to Athena’s altar during the Trojan war. He was then abandoned ill on Lemnos from where Odysseus tried to take him back, first securing possession of his bow, which the oracle had predicted would help the Greeks conquer Troy if used by Achilles’ son Neoptolemus. Philoctetes suffers in isolation terrible wounds and pain (Sophocles 1990: 25). Apart from this thematic connection between the two illnesses described in the two works, the narrator explains how admirable was the simple and frank writing of Sophocles, which emphasised the importance of truth, even if the scenes described would make readers feel uncomfortable:

Μελετώντας όμως ταριστούργημα, ο κ. καθηγητής ανακάλυψε και κάτι άλλο. Θάμαζε ο Αντρέας με τι θάρρος, με τι χρώματα χτυπητά, με πόση αλήθεια κι απλότητα συνάμα, ο Σοφοκλής σου παρασταίνει την αρρώστια του Φιλοκτήτη. Δεν το φοβάται να

<sup>15</sup>Palamas’s review seems to have touched very succinctly upon both influences: “‘Η Άρρωστη Δούλα!’ Υπάρχει θέμα πιο νατουραλιστικό, πιο πρόστυχο για τους γαλαζοαίματους; Και όμως ο τρόπος που μεταχειρίζεται ο τεχνίτης ζωγραφίζοντας την εικόνα του, της δίνει της άρρωστης τραγική σπουδαιότητα σοφοκλικής ηρώισσας, καθώς είναι σοφά και παράξενα μαζί σφιχτοπλεγμένα τα τιποτένια πεζά ιστορικά της δούλας με την υψηλονόητη ποίηση το Σοφοκλή” (the emphasis as it is in the text). The review was published in *Noumas* (while Psycharis’s novel was still appearing in the journal every week) as part of Palamas’s article: “Από την Αφορμή ενός Λόγου: Για το Εθνικό Έπος των Νεωτέρων Ελλήνων. Γ’” (1907, 20/5: 1-3). It appears to be the only article in the journal though reviewing this novel. Xenopoulos also reviewed the novel in *Neon Asti* (28/5/1907), as mentioned in Valetas 1979: 303.

σου δείξη τα πράματα όπως είναι· από τους πρώτους στίχους σου λέει πως από το πόδι του αίμα στάζει, πως η πληγή του το τρώει, πως τα κουρέλλια το είναι γιομάτα έμψυχο, πως άγριο το κακό του κι άμα σκουντάψη πουθενά περπατώντας, ο πόνος τον έθερίζει. Την αρρώστια την τρομερή, ο ποιητής δεν την αποσκεπάζει, δεν την κρύφτει, σου τη φανερώνει στα μάτια, εν κακοίσι τοίσδ'· οίοις οράς, τηνέ βλέπεις. Για την αρρώστια χίλια έχει πάντα να σου πη και να σου ξαναπή· ενώ μαζί με τον άρρωστο ζης, όσο ξετυλίγεται το δράμα, σου λέει κιόλας πως δε γίνεται και θα τη χορτάσης την ανυπόφερτη συντροφιά, πλησθής της νόσου ξυνουσία· και πως να μην αηδιάσης και μπουχτίσης; (14/1: 3) (the emphasis as it is in the text)

There is an interesting twist in the tragedy between truth and deception, which is used metaphorically by Psycharis in order to defend his literary theory: “Ο κ. καθηγητής μπορεί να μην καταλάβαινε ακόμη όπως έπρεπε τους αρχαίους, μήτε τον ίδιο τον Σοφοκλή. Έμελλε κατόπι να μάθη πως η πλάνη κυβερνά τον κόσμο, πως ο χορός εκείνη τη στιγμή γύρευε με λόγια να γελάση τον εαυτό του, πως έτσι γίνονται πολλά και σήμερις ακόμη, και πως οι αρχαίοι, όσα μας βάζουνε στα δράματά τους, παρμένα είναι όλα τους από τη Ζωή” (7/1: 3). Interestingly, the manuscript of the novel does not contain the reference to the deception that governs the world and the art of the Ancients, pointing out only that everything in the tragedies is taken from real life: “Ο κ. καθηγητής μπορεί να μην καταλάβαινε ακόμη όπως έπρεπε τους αρχαίους, μήτε τον ίδιο τον Σοφοκλή. Έμελλε κατόπι να μάθη πως παρμένα είναι όλα τους από τη Ζωή” (1905-6: 23).<sup>16</sup> It must have been added later for the publication version – an implicit jibe against Pallis’s attitude perhaps. The ancient text empowers the author, symbolically endowing him with a voice that had a timeless appeal and allowing him not only to reach out more to his readers and challenge their preconceptions but also to remind himself perhaps of how one should conduct one’s life: “Λησμόνησε όμως ο

<sup>16</sup>This leads me to believe that there must be a second manuscript (as was the case with the previous novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά*, see Chapter Five) or that the author was making changes while the novel was serialised, suggesting extreme control of his work, always with an eye to the outcome.

καημένος ο καθηγητής τους στίχους του μεγάλου του ποιητή [...] [:] χρή δ' ἐκτός  
 ὄντα πημάτων τα δειν' ὀρᾶν. Χῶταν τις εὖ ζῇ, τηνικαῦτα τον βίον σκοπεῖν μάλιστα,  
 μή διαφθαρεῖς λάθῃ" (24/6: 3).

*H Ἀρρωστη Δούλα* is imbued with the spirit of ancient writing and its injunctions, adding to its didactic style. It is almost as if the author urges readers to keep in mind the words of the Ancients, and to lead their lives accordingly. This novel also includes two other innovative elements, which must have posed some difficulties in the printing of the period: the inclusion of transcripts of musical notes (18/11: 8) that were to be used more extensively in Psycharis's novel *Ἀγνή* (see Chapter Eight) and in many parts of the novel, the chart of the patient's fluctuating temperature. While the latter is included in the name of authenticity and detailed writing, the former betrays the author's increasing interest in literary experimentation and the need to expand artistic inspiration through diverse cultural stimuli.

### 1.1. Concluding remarks

Psycharis's novel balances admirably between the strict proclamations and aims of the naturalistic movement by which it has clearly been influenced, and the author's more expansive programme to promote his views on issues of health and illness, and how they should be dealt with, on language as an expression of honesty and understanding of life, and on literary writing overall. However, it is obvious that the length of the novel undermined the author's innovative aspirations and made the reading tiring and repetitive, with the risk of readers abandoning it altogether. This was the point on which the attacks and criticism even from his close friends and collaborators concentrated. However, the length of the novel, like the illness of the main character which seemed to have no ending, represented for the author the

process of reading and writing that he, apparently, considered infinite. Accordingly, compromising its length would have meant betraying the examination of truth, and adopting a totally fictitious approach. Furthermore, as has been pointed out by the author, a novel written in the demotic, even if it was attacked for its length, was a considerable achievement not to be underestimated (see extract above). From Psycharis's point of view, the benefits certainly outweighed the disadvantages. This novel foregrounds the question of whether documenting reality in fiction is more important than the aesthetic pleasure of reading, and deviates significantly from the author's early work, *To Ταξίδι μου*, which has been described by him as an attempt to entertain as much as to teach; it was perhaps unavoidable, considering its rather provocative and original theme.

## 2. *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*

In January 1921, the periodical *Noumas* prepared its readers by announcing the serialisation of Psycharis's unpublished novel: *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*: “Έτσι οι αναγνώστες του ‘Νουμά’ θα μπορέσουν να μπούνε αμέσως στην ουσία του αθάνατου έργου – γιατί θα μείνουν αληθινά αθάνατα Τα δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου” (30/1: 65). The novel (‘ρομάντζο’, as it is called by the author in the prologue) consists of two parts, two independent novellas, the second one being longer than the first: *Του Θύμη τα Τριαντάφυλλα* and *Το Τριαντάφυλλο του Κωστή*. They were both published in *Noumas* from 6<sup>th</sup> February 1921 to 8<sup>th</sup> May 1921, issues 722-735, but they were written much earlier, in 1899.<sup>17</sup> The author noted that the first novella had been published independently in the newspaper *Asti* from 30<sup>th</sup> December

<sup>17</sup>Psycharis uses the term ‘ρομάντζο’, meaning novel, as the demotic synonym of ‘μυθιστόρημα’.



1900 to 6<sup>th</sup> January 1901, explaining also that the first title of the novel was ‘Ηλιοβασιλέματα’ – indeed the word features prominently in both novellas, especially in the first one:

[...] Τα δυό μαζί τάγραφα πέρσι το καλοκαίρι. Όλο το μυθιστόρημα θάχη καμιά διακοσαριά σελίδες τυπωμένο. Μα δε θέλω να κουράσω τον αναγνώστη· δεν ταιριάζει και πολύ για επιφυλλίδα όλο μαζί. Κι έτσι αφήνω το μισό· σα βγη, θα βγη σε βιβλίο με το πρώτο μέρος. Άξαφνα όμως μπορεί ο αναγνώστης να βρη και στο πρώτο αφτό, δηλαδή “Στου Θύμη του (sic) τριαντάφυλλα”, δυο τρία λόγια ή μερικές φράσεις για το δέφτερο μέρος, “Το τριαντάφυλλο του Κωστή”. Αφτά δεν τάλλαξα, γιατί δεν είναι και πολλά, έφκολλα καταλαβαίνονται κι όποιος διαβάση πιο ύστερα το δέφτερο μέρος, δίχως να ξαναδιαβάση το πρώτο, θα δη πως και μοναχό του διαβάζεται (1921, 6/2: 85).<sup>18</sup>

This quotation is included in the beginning of the first novella exactly as it was published originally in *Asti*; the author refers to the date of writing the novel, and therefore, ‘last year’ refers to the year 1899.

The novel is dedicated by Psycharis to G. Averof for his personality, his rational use of his material wealth and his efforts on behalf of the standardisation of the demotic. However, in his usual opinionated style, Psycharis admits in the prologue that even though his friend Averof spoke of the benefits of adopting a more conciliatory position in the linguistic struggle, in order to gain practical benefits for the cause, he himself insisted on taking the struggle to the end. In that respect, the author appears unrealistic to the point of irrationality: “Κι από τη χρυσή σου την κουβέντα ρίζωσε ακόμη πιο κατάβαθα στο μυαλό μου, πιο γερά ρίζωσε η πεποίθηση πως απαραίτητος όρος, στον αγώνα το γλωσσικό, είναι να μην πιστέβει κανείς, για το

<sup>18</sup>The novel was not published in book form and it is unfortunate that the manuscript no. 4844 entitled *Ηλιοβασιλέματα*, mentioned in Psycharis’s bibliography prepared by Valetas (1980: 128) and in Tomadakis’s introduction to the Ouranis edition of *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1991: 16), has been lost from the Benaki library, at least as far as I could ascertain on my last visit there in September 2003. The references to the 1921 serialised publication in this thesis will be given henceforth by date of issue followed by page number.

ζήτημα του συμβιβασμού, μήτε τους καλότερους φίλους του, μήτε σένα τον ίδιο· απαραίτητος όρος να μη ζη στην Ελλάδα· όρος απαραίτητος να μην είναι κανείς πραχτικός” (6/2: 84). He justifies the above terms and conditions by stating that he, who had been uncompromising, impractical and living outside Greece, had achieved a lot more for the cause than anybody else (ibid).

Psycharis’s contradictions and completely egotistical style are apparent also in the other two references in the prologue that are difficult to explain. Firstly, there seems to be a confusion regarding the aims of the novel and its genre. Even though in the beginning of the dedication the author renounces the first title of the work ‘Ηλιοβασιλέματα’ as too romantic, he fails to prove in the course of the narration his claims that the novel is a “positive historical narrative”: “Όμορφη λέξη, μα που μου φάνηκε κατόπι πως δεν ταίριαζε δω, επειδή κ’ είχε κάποιαν αοριστία, είτανε κατάλληλη βέβαια για καμιά Συλλογή στίχους, πάρα πολύ όμως ποιητική για ένα μυθιστόρημα που είναι μάλιστα θετικό, ιστορικό πράμα, όπως είναι το δικό μου [...]” (6/2: 83).<sup>19</sup> The reader fails to see how this novel that consists of two novellas, which are both based on the theme of unfulfilled love, presented in a sentimental tone with a degree of lyricism, can be defined as ‘θετικό, ιστορικό πράμα’. The contradiction is even more apparent when, further on in the prologue, the author decides to define his novel as “[...] λατρεία του Ιδανικού. Από κει κι ο τίτλος του [...]” (6/2: 84). Thus calling it a historical positivist novel seems like an empty claim that the author makes, then dismisses in the same prologue, and which is nowhere justified in the narrative.

The other contradiction involves the disproportionate mention of the person chosen to be honoured, and his merits, in contrast to the author’s own ideas and actions, and in particular with regard to the discussion of the author’s love for Olga

<sup>19</sup>Perhaps meaning ‘positivist’ by the word θετικό. ‘Historical’ in the sense of presenting the course of the love affairs, which were based on a true story, at least in the second case.

Valaoritis, who has inspired most of the main female characters in his novels. It is as if G. Averof is only being used as long as he can function as a convenient recipient of the author's confessions. Olga Valaoritis continues to guide Psycharis's work even after her death and is elevated in his mind into a symbol of the eternal soul of the Greek people. By being alive in spirit she illuminates the way for the Greek nation. As is pointed out by the narrator of the second novella, referring to the character Myrro, another representation of Olga Valaoritis, "[...] έβγαινε φλόγα, φλόγα που, πέθανε δεν πέθανε η Μύρρω, άνεμος κανένας δε θα βρεθή να μπορέση να τη σβήση" (13/2: 99).<sup>20</sup>

The first novella is the story of a young man, who has entrusted his confession to the narrator. The second novella is the story of the love of a young woman, as expressed in her letters to her lover: "Τα ιστορικά του πρώτου [...] είναι ιστορικά ενός νέου που μου τα ξεμυστηρέφτηκε άλλοτε στην Αθήνα. Τα ιστορικά του δεύτερου είναι αθάνατα. Κ' έτσι τα ονομάζω, γιατί δεν είναι δικά μου. Δικά μου δηλαδή δεν είναι τα γράμματα που αποτελούνε την ουσία του ρομάντζου" (6/2: 85). As is mentioned also in the author's correspondence, that novella consists of the translated French letters of Olga Valaoritis. In the first novella, *Του Θύμη τα Τριαντάφυλλα*, the main character meets his beloved again unexpectedly after thirty years and experiences a resurgence of the feelings he had kept in his heart for her all these years. The novella is written in the first person, which gives an immediacy to the narration and a realistic and frank tone in the expression of the sentiments. The main character reminisces about his love for Mella that was not fulfilled because, as he had

<sup>20</sup> Mr. Markos Dragoumis has brought to my attention a significant letter and poem written by Psycharis, included in Olga Valaoritis's personal collection of letters (λεύκωμα). It is obvious that Psycharis considered her a source of inspiration from the very beginning of their liaison. In the poem written for her, she is vividly portrayed as the writer's Muse who could help him formulate a new language for the people of Greece: "[...] Et je façonnerai, pour vous faire plus belle,/sur le vieux sol d'Hellas un langage nouveau (Psychari 1893, collection of Olga Valaoritis, Charamoglios Library).

thought until then, she had rejected his proposal of marriage. He meets the object of his love accidentally after many years, and after exchanging a few reluctant words it becomes apparent to both that they had been robbed of their happiness because of the interference of the girl's father. The latter had managed to convince each one separately that the other was not interested. He had insisted that Mella married a count, who eventually took advantage of their situation, spending all the money and abandoning Mella. As a result, both the narrator and the object of his affections had had unhappy lives. Even though the years had passed, the two lovers felt the same warmth in their hearts for each other; it was however, impossible at that time of their meeting to bring back their past happiness and change their circumstances. The two lovers parted company once more, having gained the bitter knowledge of what had caused their separation: “Και γιατί; γιατί; για το πείσμα και την περηφάνεια, για την πρόληψη ενός ανθρώπου, ενός πλούσιου, που άδικα μας τη χάλασε, δίχως πια κανέναν ποτέ να μπορέσει να μας την ξαναδώσει” (6/2: 96).

This story reminds readers of a similar plot in Psycharis's French novel *L'Épreuve* (1899), which was published, significantly, at the same time that the Greek novel was being written.<sup>21</sup> The French novel describes how the cruel, selfish father of Lucy, the main character, employed every means, psychological and other, in order to separate his daughter from the young painter with whom she was in love. In both narratives (French and Greek) there is a tendency to generalisation in order to engage readers and encourage them to participate through the feelings of anxiety and disappointment that they may have experienced in their own lives: “πες μου τώρα όμως, σε παρακαλώ, και κάτι άλλο. Η ώρα περνά· έρχεται άλλη. Μα πέρασε η ζωή σου. Μπας και θα σου ξανάρθι; [...] Μπορείς άξαφνα να την ξανακάμης, μπορείς να

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<sup>21</sup>Jean Psychari, *L'Épreuve*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1899.

την ξαναφτειάσης, αφού πέρασε πια, μπορείς με κλάματα και με δαρμούς και με φωνές να τη φέρης πίσω [...]” (6/2: 87). Expressions of powerlessness in the face of the forces of evil, bitterness and loss pervade both narratives.

In *Του Θύμη τα Τριαντάφυλλα*, there are a few references to the title of the manuscript, ‘Ηλιοβασιλέματα’, which becomes like a *leitmotif* that suggests the loss of youth, the inevitability of an end approaching and a sadness at what is left unfulfilled. Loss of youth and anxiety over time passing are two of Psycharis’s repeated themes in his novels (see in particular *Η Αγνή* (1913) in Chapter Eight). However, the lyricism and the mainly first-person narration indicate a considerable difference from the usual tone in which most of Psycharis’s novels were written (omniscience and remarkably frequent addresses to the readers), and create a very alluring poetic style: “Με το πόδι σαν το μολύβι βαρί, με μαλλιά σαν το χιόνι, με το κεφάλι σκυφτό, θα πάω στο ίδιο το σπίτι, γέρος, να χαιρετήσω τη νιότη μου τη χαρούμενη, που δε θα με γνωρίσει, αν τύχη και με ξαναδιή” (6/2: 93).

Apart from the tendency to generalise, there are almost no elements of didacticism in this novella – but ‘almost’ is the correct word, as the author advertises the work of his friend Eftaliotis in a footnote: “Στίχοι παρμένοι, από την ωραία Πατινάδα του Αργύρη Εφταλιώτη. Το ίδιο και παρακάτω” (6/2: 87). Furthermore, there is a reference to the significance of Greece’s national poets Solomos and Valaoritis, who form part of Psycharis’s literary canon, as expressed in most of his essays, and comparison with the literary climate in Constantinople, that indicated the absence of a national poet there: “Η Ζάκυθο έχει το Σολωμό, Η Άγια Μάβρα το Βαλαωρίτη, Μπαίρωνά σου φωνάζει το Μεσολόγγι. Εδώ δε φάνηκε ποτέξ μήτε ξένος ποιητής! Όνομα έχει μοναχά η ξερή μας η Πόλη, όνομα καμωμένο από σφαγές, από

δάκρια κι από αίμα [...]” (6/2: 88).<sup>22</sup> The author wanted to emphasise the importance of a literature written in the language of the people. Had it not been for these references, one might have thought that this work did not belong to Psycharis.

The second novella, *To Τριαντάφυλλο του Κωστή*, justifies the inclusion of this novel overall in Psycharis’s provocative work as I will explain below. The second novella is a series of letters written by Myrro, addressed to her lover Kostis, and entrusted by the latter to the narrator, who was his friend, and who makes a comparison between his own and his friend’s unfortunate love affairs. This novella reminds readers of Psycharis’s short story *Ζούλια*, consisting of two parts, and presenting two unfortunate stories, using the same technique of letters received by the narrator, analysing the universal themes of love and jealousy. In *To Τριαντάφυλλο του Κωστή* we find the title appearing again as a *leitmotif* as in the first part; this time, the reference is to a collection of poetry written by Kostis, entitled ‘Τριαντάφυλλο’ (see for example 27/2: 132 & 135). This collection of poetry is sent to his beloved in sections while he is still working on it, representing perhaps the gradual appearance of the novella itself in the periodical. However, there are also references to the first title of the novel, ‘Ηλιοβασιλέματα’, thus making a link with the first novella (the first part of the novel) as well: “Σήμερα ταπόβραδο, την ώρα που ο ήλιος βασιλέβει, αχ! τη θυμάσαι την κακόμοιρή μας την αγαπημένη την ώρα [...]” (13/2: 102). These *leitmotifs* are markers that indicate the self-reflexive style of writing, always referring to itself and its own creation.

In the second novella, the love of the two young people is doomed because of the obstacle of religion – one was a Catholic and the other one was an Orthodox

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<sup>22</sup>For more on Psycharis’s views on his literary precursors see Chapter One of the thesis. He also mentions his esteem for Solomos and Valaoritis in his letters a few times: “Ο Σολωμός κι ο Βαλαωρίτης είναι πατέρες μας. Και δεν ταιριάζει να το ξεχνούμε” (Karatzas 1988: 102). See also Psycharis 1906b: 231.



Christian. The mother of the girl, who was Orthodox, showed some tolerance towards her daughter's weakness for Kostis, but had stated clearly that she would curse their union if they ever got together. Thus in this case, it is the mother of the girl who poses obstacles to their union, whereas in the first novella it was the father. Through these letters, the readers realise the increasing despair of the two lovers until in the end, the narrator informs them of how they perished: "Ενάντια τους σταθήκανε όλα. Μα και να μην τους στεκόντανε, τι τους φελούσε; [...] Παλέβανε αφοί με την αρρώστια, με τη φύση την ίδια. Τον έκανε τον έσβησε το χτικιό· την άλληνε, λίγο λίγο την έλιωσε η αγάπη, που δύναμη δεν είχε μέσα της, όση έπρεπε, ναντισταθή παραπάνω" (8/5: 291).

However, the obstacle of religion is only a fictional pretext for a far more serious implication. It covers the illicit love in real life between the author and his beloved Olga Valaoritis and the fact that their union could find no outlet in social terms, hence becoming the creative force behind most – if not all – of Psycharis's novels. As is mentioned by the author in the prologue, the letters belonged to his beloved and he 'used' them, translating them from the French, to express the intensity of their emotional connection. The novella is based on these letters exchanged between Myrro and Kostis, in reality between Olga Valaoritis and Psycharis. I have not been able to locate any of these possible letters that Olga could have sent to Psycharis but it is without doubt a possibility, since this novella seems to be very different from the author's usual writing, hence supporting the argument that the letters were not his fictional creation. In my search in the archives of Aristotelis Valaoritis, I did not find any of the letters that Olga might have received by the author either. However, Olga Valaoritis's correspondence with her family presented the following interesting finding to the researcher. In her letters to her brother and mother she writes in Italian, which was widely spoken in Lefkada – though other members of

the family wrote in formal Greek. From a certain date onwards though, which must correspond to the period after her meeting with Psycharis, she starts writing in French (to her family), as an influence of her contact, at least through correspondence, with Psycharis. Perhaps this explains also why Psycharis informs readers in the prologue that the letters of his novella were translated from French into Greek:

Τα γράμματα που θα διαβάσης είναι γραμμένα γαλλικά  
και γω τα μετάφρασα ρωμαίικα. Γράμματα που πρέπει,  
φίλε μου, να τα περάσης, όχι μόνο με αγάπη παρά με  
σέβας. Με συγκίνηση πια, ρώτημα δεν είναι. Γράμματα  
κόρης αγνής, γράμματα μεγάλης παρθένας, γράμματα  
της Μυρριάννας. Θέλω για τη Μυριάννα (sic) σήμερα  
να σου κάμω λόγο και δεν μπορώ, επειδή με πνίγουνε  
ακόμη τα κλάματα, είκοσι τρία χρόνια τώρα που πέθανε,  
και με πνίξανε κάθε φορά που την ανάφερα στα γραφτά  
μου (6/2: 85).<sup>23</sup>

Olga's handwriting overflows the page she uses and she continues even in vertical lines on top of the normal horizontal writing. Most of the letters are indecipherable, and in particular, during periods of family tensions the writing becomes more unclear. From what I could understand of the contents and the style of writing, Olga must have been a very passionate personality, possibly also mentally unstable.<sup>24</sup> This type of overblown emotional expression also characterises the letters of the novella. There is an absence of any form of didacticism, not even an occasional mention or the usual Psycharean digressions. Instead, there is a repetition of feelings, as a result of the fragmentary form (presented in letters) and the serialised publication. Only at the end does the narrator put his personal seal on his creation, by exposing his own bitterness.

<sup>23</sup>“Myrriana” is one of the names given to Olga Valaoritis, in Psycharis's novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, and in some of his letters. Olga had died in 1897, the prologue was published on “Παρασκεβή, 12 του Σποριά 1920” (6/2: 85), exactly twenty-three years later as mentioned.

<sup>24</sup>See Archive of Valaoritis Family, archive of Eloisia Valaoritis, files 8.8-10.8: letters of children Emilios, Andreas, Olga to their mother Eloisia (1867-1890) and Olga's letters to her brother Ioannis (1877-1897), Greek Literary and Historical Achive (E.L.I.A) 1999, edited by Ch. Varda and S. Bora.

He appeals to people in power to change the mentalities of the public in order to protect the need and the right of lovers to live together.<sup>25</sup>

Psycharis mentions the creation of this novella based on the letters of his beloved in his correspondence with Eftaliotis. In one of his letters to his friend, he includes one of 'Myrriana's' letters, and this is an indirect proof of the close liaison between the author and Myrriana and of the existence of these letters. She writes to him (in French) about the significance of his work: "[...] Je dis d'autres, car tu lui as déjà tant sacrifié de ta vie et même de ta carrière, âme noble et généreuse que tu es! Mais une oeuvre pareille est avide et exigeante, tu le sais. Ne l'abandonne pas. Jean, qui sait? Morte, je serais peut-être ton aide et ton soutien plus que je n'ai pu être vivante" [...] Κι αφού σου τα λέω αυτά, θα σου στείλω, άμα βρεθής, και τα *Ηλιοβασιλέματα*, το ρομάντζο μου εκείνο που τόκαμα το περασμένο καλοκαίρι [...]" concludes Psycharis (Karatzas 1988: 278).<sup>26</sup>

It is understandable that, like Kostis, the recipient of the letters, Psycharis must have felt under pressure at the time, because of, on the one hand, his feelings for Olga Valaoritis, who is elevated to the rank of sainthood, and on the other, his beliefs in honesty and fairness. The tension must have collided with his established domestic and social situation, which prevented him from honouring his love towards her. As a result, the resolution was for the unfortunate girl to commit suicide, while Psycharis had to live with that burden all his life.<sup>27</sup> With his last remarks in the narrative, asking

<sup>25</sup>Psycharis was always in favour of the expression of true love (see letter to Eftaliotis in Karatzas 1988: 606).

<sup>26</sup>See also letter on pages 247 & 8 about their doomed relationship and the girl's death.

<sup>27</sup>The decisive date for their liaison, when they realised that they were in love, is discussed in Psycharis's letters to Eftaliotis, in this part of the novel, as well as in his other novels. Furthermore, it is written in his dedication to her of the French publication of *Zούλια* (*Jalousie*): "Mademoiselle Olga A. Valaority, En souvenir du 25 Novembre 1893, Jean Psichari, Paris, 28 Février, 1895" (Psichari 1895b). As is pointed out in this novella, Myrro's wish must have been realised in all the author's narratives: "Άχ! Η μέρα μας εκείνη, εκείνη μας η βραδειά η τρισμάκαρη κ' η τρισάγια, όπου πρωταγαπηθήκαμε, όπου πρωτοχαρήκαμε την αγάπη μας! Μέρα βλογημένη, μέρα μοναδική, μέσα σ'όλες τις μέρες της

people to help the lovers in the world, the narrator of the novella demanded the impossible. Carried away by personal feelings, he seems to envision a society where all the constraints would fall away in the name of love. This seems to be his message overall in the novel, intensified in particular in the second novella, which appears as a very personal account.

As in *Zούλια*, the author uses the technique of the epistolary novel and allows the voice of the writer of the letters to come through. For once he remains effaced behind the voice, the words, and the feelings of the writer of the letters, in accordance with his reassurance in the prologue that “δικά μου δηλαδή δεν είναι τα γράμματα που αποτελούνε την ουσία του ρομάντζου” (6/2: 85). He shares with the rest of the world, however, through the pretext of a fictional story, his own love story and turns his love into letters. Even though the novel does not fit with the rest of Psycharis’s novels in terms of the emphasis placed on the issue of love, without its counterbalancing notions of ambition, hard work, and glory, it is in my opinion, provocative and original, because the author presented his secret love and his deepest feelings to the world. One could say that he thus exposed the feelings of the girl: “Δε διστάζω, δε φοβούμαι διόλου, δε σκιάζομαι να μιλήσω για τα γράμματα της Κόρης του αταίριαχτου ποιητή μας, που μόνος αφτός, στον καιρό του, παραβγήκε με το Σολωμό” (6/2: 85).<sup>28</sup>

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ζωής μου! Ακόμη και σαν πεθάνω, σα δε σου γράφω πια μου, να μου την αφιερώσης, αγαπημένε, τη μέρα εκείνη, έτσι δεν είναι;” (8/5: 290).

<sup>28</sup>Alkis Thrylos also mentions that Psycharis lacked the measure to judge whether exposing his personal affairs was suitable in certain circumstances or not (1963: 249).

## 2.1. Concluding remarks

Therefore, in terms of didacticism, the two stories overall present a few general remarks about the precariousness of life, the importance of love, and the unjust interference of parents in their children's lives. The importance of demotic literature is expressed only in the first novella. However, the two novellas are part of Psycharis's work that analyses the issue of love. Even though most of his novels present some aspect of this issue, in this serialised novel, in particular, love seems to be the main theme: the memories in the first novella, and the letters in the second, are filled with expressions of love. Love is associated also with the creative force (poetry) as the character in the second novella writes verses that are part of his expression of love towards the girl. Thus in this novel love represents one facet of the dualist Apollonian-Dionysian expression (the more artistic and idealised aspect)<sup>29</sup>: “Ποίηση κι αγάπη, μα στις ψυχής μου ταπόβαθα. Να βγούμε όξω, τίποτα! Το στόμα μου μάρμαρο, η πέννα μου μολύβι [...]” (6/2: 88). Unlike the above reference in the first novella, the overt presentation of the loving feelings of the girl Myrro in the second – who is also the ‘fictional’ Olia in Kostis's collection of poetry (without doubt to honour the real life Olga) – reveals a degree of audacity on the part of the author. If we consider the customs of the period and the author's social and family situation, it is reasonable to conclude that the novel was part of his provocative work. It did not cause any controversy and it did not promote the usual views of the author about language and literature but it functioned as an opportunity to confess and to relieve some of his personal burden.

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<sup>29</sup>For this division, see also Chapter Seven of this thesis.

### 3. *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης*

As explained above, in *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), the elements of didacticism and controversy are located in the analysis of topics that were considered unmentionable: people's bodily functions and medical details regarding health problems. In the novel *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921), the author's audacity in presenting his secret love to the world and, one could say also exposing the feelings of his beloved constitutes a very provocative stance. In the unpublished novel *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914), the provocative writing is created through explicit erotic descriptions following similar scenes from the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1911). Inasmuch as Psycharis had already presented *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* to the general public, and had entertained, in his correspondence with Eftaliotis, the idea of a volume of obscene poetry, that he and his friend would create together as an escape and relaxation from their serious work, one is probably not too surprised to read this unpublished last novel in Greek.<sup>30</sup> Let us not forget also the author's public speech in 'Parnassos' in 1893, with theme 'The kiss' (see Psycharis 1996).<sup>31</sup>

The novel was discovered through my research in the Benaki Library. As I was looking through Psycharis's library, I came across his handwritten unpublished novel entitled: *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (Αθήνα 1914, numbered 18677). The novel is mentioned in the prologue of *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* in *Noumas*, where the author talks about all the female characters in his novels, who are representations of Olga Valaoritis: "[...] Μύρρω τη βάφτισσα (sic) σε κάποιαν ανέκδοτή μου *Νίκη του πόνου και της αγάπης*, ένα ρομάντζο και τούτο" (6/2: 85). However, it is not mentioned in any of Psycharis's bibliographies or any of his other

<sup>30</sup>Για τον τόμο του 'Γαμησιού' που λεξ, για τα 'Κρυπτάδια' που λένε ή για 'Το βιβλίο της ψ. Και του μ.' που μπορούμε να το πούμε μεις, άβριο μεθάβριο κάτι σου στέλνω" (Karatzas 1988: 153).

<sup>31</sup>"Το Φύλι" was published in *Estia* (1893, 45: 289-302), in *Ρόδα και Μήλα Β'* (1903b: 43-99) and its French translation in *Autour de la Grèce* (in Psychari 1895a: 93-159).



novels and critical essays, apart from on the inside flap of the book jacket of *Le Solitaire du Pacifique* (1922) and *Typesses* (1923). On the inside cover of the author's last novel *Le Crime de Lazarina* is written: "la liste complete des ouvrages de l'auteur se lit dans *Le Solitaire du Pacifique* (Albin Michel 1922) et dans *Typesses* (Éditions du Monde Moderne 1923). It does not seem to be known to scholars who have discussed Psycharis's novels in their articles. There is no mention of it in Psycharis's correspondence, not even to the process of writing it, which according to the author's note at the end of the document took about seven years: "Σάββατο, 16 του Μάη 1914 το βράδι, (θα είναι αρχινημένο από το 1906 [or 7, the number is corrected on top], πρέπει να ερεβνηθή. Από τότες, μέρα δεν πέρασε που να μη γράψω τουλάχιστο μια λεξούλα, σα δεν άδειαζα κυριολεκτικά να γράψω δυο. Φέτο μονάχα το καλοκαίρι το πήρα λιγάκι από πιο κοντά και το τέλειωσα σήμερα με τη χαρά του λυτρωμού που δίνει στο νου η λεφτεριά) Ψυχάρης" (1914: 255).

The novel is not known, therefore, to the general public, despite the mention in *Noumas*, which leads one to think, nevertheless, that perhaps its publication was just a matter of time or of finding the courage to proceed with it. It is also not without significance that the novel starts with a quotation from Dante's *Inferno*, Canto II, which was common practice for the author, and ends with the specific mention of the time it took to be written, like in all his other novels. This is another indication, in my opinion, that the author intended to publish it at some stage. Yet considering the provocative content, and the fact that Psycharis lost his first son shortly after he finished writing this novel (22 August 1914), it is perhaps clear why the novel remained in his drawer (see Kriaras 1981: 234, and Karatzas 1988: 640 for the death

of his son).<sup>32</sup> As the novel is not accessible to the reader, I will only make a rudimentary analysis, including it in this chapter of my thesis because of its lurid content. I hope that in the future either I or another researcher will be able to get this work published and made widely available. Being such a prolific writer, and an expansive personality, Psycharis was constantly writing and had plans for future novels and for other literary work. I believe that we do not possess the full extent of his creative work – perhaps we never will. This discovery leaves open the possibility of other similar texts that have either not been found up until now or have been destroyed. At least until 1920, however, when the prologue of *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* was written, there is no mention of another novel; had it been written before then, the author would have included it in the prologue of *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*, where he mentions all his female characters who are representations of Olga Valaoritis, as pointed out above. Nevertheless, we cannot be certain.

The novel is part of Psycharis's autobiographical writing, fictionalising events from his personal life. The author adopts the stance of dividing himself in two personas, his brother Andreas (or Kostas as mentioned in the beginning of the narrative), the more impulsive and audacious, and the narrator, who is conventional but similar to his brother in tastes and manners:

Αλήθεια, σαν καθρέφτης μπροστά μου, είτανε ο αδερφός.  
 Δηλαδή, όσα εγώ μέσα μου κρατούσα, όσα έπνιγε μέσα μου  
 ο μισός μου ο πολιτισμός, ή πολύ πιο σωστά, όσα περιώριζε  
 γύρο μου ο πολιτισμός των αλλωνώνε και δεν τάφινε να  
 βγούνε, αφτά, ο Αντρέας τάβγαζε όξω, δίχως να του μέλη-  
 όπως είτανε μέσα του, άγριος, αχαλίνωτος, ατόφιος και να

<sup>32</sup>It is worth pointing out that in Psycharis's previous novel *Αγνή*, which is mainly autobiographical, the main character, the writer Andreas, kept some of his work in his desk drawers, with the confidence that it will be published after his death. (Psycharis 1930a: 176 & 1912-3: 20). It is possible that this mention applies to his *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης*.

μην το κρύφουμε πάλε, με το κάτι εκείνο το μαγεφτικό που σε συνέπαιρνε, τέτοιος φαινότανε κιόλας. Εγώ δεν τολμούσα. Ήθελα βλέπεις να με περνούνε και για Γάλλο (1914: 31-2).

The fictional brother was living in Constantinople while the narrator was in Paris. When the former became very ill, he asked for his brother to come and support him in his difficult times; in the meantime though, he had sent him his notebooks, which presented with frankness and audacity episodes of his life. Reading these notebooks, the narrator thinks, as a result, about their lives, the special moments from their childhood years, and also his own adventures: “[...] ο αδερφός μου, όταν έπεσε άρρωστος, μου είχε στείλει κάτι τετράδια όπου δηγότανε τα ιστορικά του, ένα είδος *ιδιοβιογραφία*, παράξενη, χωρίς καμιά τέχνη, μπερδεμένα όλα κι άνω κάτω, ασύνταχτη κι ωστόσο γραμμένη με σπάνια ειλικρίνεια” (1914: 1, my emphasis).<sup>33</sup> Thus the novel exploits again the ploy of a fictional writer whose work is received by the narrator. There are, therefore, two narrators, the writer of the notebooks, and the recipient of the notebooks, who reads and presents them to the prospective readers together with his own story which follows a parallel path to the first set of stories.

The brother Andreas or Kostas writes about his erotic liaison with a sixteen-year old girl named Myrro, he describes how he masturbates in front of her, then throws money at her, how he hits her in order to dominate her, how he seduces her to have sex with another man, only to repay her by playing around with her younger sister. There is no logic in the presentation of events, no sequence and a lot of repetitions. For example, the motif of the seduction is repeated again with other characters in another part of the novel; this time, the seducer is a servant who initiates a younger girl in a sexual awakening and encourages her to have sex with her suitor.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Ιδιοβιογραφία’ is an interesting term used by Psycharis, it implies not only the term ‘autobiography’ – somebody who writes about his own life – but also the mode of writing, which is non-standardised, peculiar and corresponds to the personality of the writer.

The idea that somebody else's erotic adventures, or talk about them, will arouse the desire of the character who happens to watch or hear about them is repeated several times, playfully suggesting that the readers of this work will also respond in a similar manner.

The author adopts the double stance of being the narrator and the reader at the same time. One story read from the notebook of his brother incites him to present his own parallel story. At the same time, this double perspective mirrors the position of the prospective readers who perform the act of reading through which they may be thinking about their own stories. The fragmentary, even confusing writing of the novel, in accordance with the 'received notebooks',<sup>34</sup> the implication that the writer is also the reader, and the creation of a fictional brother again, as in *To Ταξίδι μου* and *Τα Δυο Αδέρφητα*, suggests that the author wanted to believe that his readers were like him, bringing to mind Baudelaire's address to his readers in the poem 'Au lecteur' from *Les Fleurs du Mal*: "Tu le connais, lecteur, ce monstre délicat, – Hypocrite lecteur, – mon semblable, – mon frère" (Baudelaire 1942: 2). The creation of the brother betrays the author's tendency to recreate himself as an extreme expression of narcissism.

This novel is an example of the author's intention to provoke readers with the depiction of erotic adventures, very innovative for the period, and is part of his main theme of exploration of love and eroticism and their implications. In addition, it emphasises again, as in the novel *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα*, the author's belief in frankness and openness even about issues that were considered forbidden or very personal. However, if in the previously discussed narrative, *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου*, the love presented was very idealistic and associated with artistic creativity, in this

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<sup>34</sup>In most parts of the novel it is not clear whether the narrator is recalling his own story or reading that of his brother. This may be partly due to the handwritten text, not entirely clear to read.

novel the author explores various forms of perverted love.<sup>35</sup> The force that lies behind the love described in the narrative is not used by the characters in order to create poetry but mainly to satisfy the desires of the flesh, and the noting down of all the incidents, operates as a form of relief, in accordance also with the dictum that initiates the novel: “D’innanzi a quella fiera ti levai” (I have relieved you from this monster).<sup>36</sup> The fragmentary thoughts of the brother present various incidents from his life where the main aim was to experience an increased erotic satisfaction.

In a rather different tone, at the beginning of the narrative, the author honours his origins by including a line from a Russian song, which suggests that life is made up of a series of happy and unhappy moments. Furthermore, the title of the narrative finds its justification in a reference that encapsulates the dualism that pervades it: “Η χαρά της ζωής είναι η αγάπη. Κι αν είτανε τόντις χαρά, αί! τότες ας δέρνουμε ας πονώ κι ας παθαίνω, τουλάχιστο να που γνώρισε μαζί μου τη χαρά!” (1914: 28). The question remains though why Psycharis wrote this type of narrative. Was he trying to reinforce his own confidence in himself and his ability as a man to seduce women? Did he follow to the letter his belief that people should talk freely about everything or was he simply trying to tease readers and provoke them with his lurid writing in a similar manner to that seen in *Ta Duo Adérphia* (see Psycharis 1910-1: 384-85 or Psycharis 1955b: 280-1 and Kokolis 1988)? The answer must be a combination of all of the above, an indication of his ‘larger than life’, expansive personality.

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<sup>35</sup>Psycharis talks about ideal love, which is the type of love experienced by poets, in a letter to his friend Eftaliotis: “Τι αγάπησες ο ίδιος εσύ; ένα ποίημα, μια ιδέα. Το ποίημα κ’ η ιδέα πάντα δικά μας· αφτά έχουμε· ο παράς μας αφτός είναι κ’ η εφτυχία μας αφτή. Η αγάπη της αγάπης άλλο δεν είναι το κάτω κάτω παρά της τέχνης η αγάπη” (Karatzas 1988: 56).

<sup>36</sup>My translation.

### 3.1. Concluding remarks

Provocation is not connected to didacticism but the narrative's self-referentiality is indicative of the general tendency that pervades most of Psycharis's novels to reflect on the process of writing, the activity of reading, the importance of literature and the crucial role of the writer. A multiplication of the author's ego is expressed in the creation of the two brothers, the one the narrator, the other the diarist, which mirrors also the internal replication of a text (diary) within a fictional text. What has the reader learned at the end of the novel? Perhaps nothing apart from the obvious: how important his position is, in relation to the author to whom he acts as a counterweight. Perhaps the author simply wanted to tease readers and nothing more.

Finally, we can say that all three novels analysed in this chapter are expressions of the author's belief in frank speech and in transposing elements from real life to fiction through a creative process.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

**ΤΑ ΔΥΟ ΑΔΕΡΦΙΑ: THE GEOGRAPHY OF  
THE GREEK SOUL<sup>1</sup>**

*Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* was published in 1910-11 – as indicated on the inside of the cover – with the subtitle “Μεγάλο εθνικό ηθογραφικό μυθιστόρημα” (see also Zolotas 1928: 833). The first draft was written in 1903, and then it was reworked between 1908 to 1911 (Psycharis 1910-1: 460). It is interesting that Psycharis chose to define his novel in this way at a period when Greek literature was already moving away from the ‘ethographic’ mode of writing.<sup>2</sup> As early as 1900, there had been an attempt, on the part of novelists and poets to embrace new themes and modes of expression from Europe.<sup>3</sup> Novelists began to be influenced by the problems of urban life, and to examine images of a different type of society, that of Greece at the beginning of the twentieth century. They also looked for innovation, which was understood in terms of broadening their sources of inspiration, and literature’s horizons.

Instrumental in the creation of a revivalist climate was the periodical *Techni* (1898-1899), which promoted the philosophy of Nietzsche, and viewed art as an activity that could be produced and understood by only a few people. However, the periodicals *Techni* and *Dionysos* (1901-1902) also promoted the sort of writing that could function as social criticism, even within the usual depiction of aspects of Greek society (Melissaratou 1992: 18).<sup>4</sup> Overall, the tendency to innovate in respect of the mode of writing led to the adoption of symbolist forms of expression. The symbolist view presupposed a different approach from the one that had been current during the

<sup>1</sup> “[...] Νάγραφε κανείς, [...] τη γεωγραφία της ψυχής. Αφτό να κάνουμε ρωμαίικα” (Psycharis 1902b: 271).

<sup>2</sup> This is partly explained by the fact that the first draft was written at an earlier date.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the varied connotations of the term ‘ethography’ in relation to the development of Modern Greek prose fiction see Melissaratou 1992 and Voutouris 1995.

<sup>4</sup> For more details about these periodicals see Tomadakis 1969-1970.

period 1880-1900 in Greece, taking the emphasis away from the collective and promoting a more idiosyncratic mode of writing.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, when Psycharis's novel appeared in 1910-1911, it was a transitional period: Naturalism was gradually losing its appeal and being replaced by the prose fiction of Aestheticism and by a fiction which brought social issues to the forefront, both of which derived from the predominance of the Symbolist movement.<sup>6</sup> The period was marked by the manifestation of different genres, but the distinctions were not clear-cut, and writers who started as naturalists, like Chatzopoulos, might develop into aestheticists; whereas, on the other hand, Theotokis, who started out by writing aestheticist prose, turned towards a more naturalistic expression later on in his career (Dallas 1997: 17-9).<sup>7</sup> The prose fiction of aestheticism embraced themes that explored the idea of 'Greekness' but also had close links with European trends, while social prose fiction gradually became more and more political. These different modes of writing overlapped to a large extent, and the principal feature in the prose of the period was an emphasis on the psychological analysis of characters and their in-depth representation.

Psycharis's novel is related to urban life (in Constantinople and Athens) but remains a more static description of people's customs. It does not participate, therefore, in the general tendencies of the period. It analyses the life and customs of certain Greek communities, in Constantinople, Athens, and the Ionian Islands, by presenting the adventures of two brothers. The objective of this 'ethography' was to express the views of the author regarding the most prominent characteristics of Greek people and what, in his view, needed to change in order to ensure the cultural and

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<sup>5</sup>Symbolism as a mode of writing was based on the use of symbols as a means of constructing a special language that could correspond to each writer's idiosyncratic way of experiencing life (Wilson 1984: 24, also Gounelas 1984: 43).

<sup>6</sup>For the fiction of Aestheticism see Sachinis 1981.

<sup>7</sup>For an examination of the different aspects of Theotokis's prose fiction see Louka 2002.

social development of the nation. In order to make his case Psycharis often offers the counterexample of Europeans (the Swiss), to make the relevant comparisons between the characteristics of each people: “[Ε]βαζα τους δυο πολιτισμούς, το δικό μας που αρχίζει και τον εβρωπαίικο που γεράζει, αντίκρυ αντίκρυ, να τους συγκρίνη ο καθένας· έβλεπες συνάμα στο βιβλίο μου πόση δύναμη έχουνε μέσα τους οι δικοί μας [...]” (Psycharis 1910-1: 245). It could be argued, therefore, that the novel remains in the area of nineteenth-century ‘ethography’ with an aim to present supposedly typical Greek characteristics; nevertheless, there is an interesting use of the ‘mirror’ as symbol, through which the author turns a personal account into a general case.<sup>8</sup>

The author starts from the childhood of the two brothers, making them complementary in their aspirations and adventures, so that an endeavour on the part of one brother reflects a comparable one by the other brother. Furthermore, many of the characters in the novel seek to define themselves in relation to others in a similar way to that whereby the novel intended to reflect the life and behaviour of real people, as observed by the author. There is also another more general objective in the narrative: to define the role of literature and of the artist in society. One of the two main characters is a writer, whose efforts to write an exceptional novel take him through various places in Greece and through various personal adventures. The mirror, which is a symbol of introspection in the novel, is also turned to face towards the narration itself, since the effort required in creative writing, and in particular artistic inspiration and the vocation of the writer, are the main themes of the novel.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Even though the mirror refers to a technique of realistic representation, in Psycharis’s novel it functions mainly as a symbol of reflection and interdependency for all the characters, and also of introspection for some of them.

<sup>9</sup>These issues were the subject of extensive discussions in the periodicals of that period, and in what appeared to be public fora. For example, the periodical *Techni* had hosted some of these discussions about literature and the role of the writer, with the viewpoints of Psycharis, Nirvanas, Palamas, Gryparis and others (see Gounelas 1984: 40). This practice suggested a deep introspection on the part of novelists regarding their work, and a sense of responsibility towards the general public.

In addition, Psycharis's aspirations were to write fiction in the demotic language so as to enrich Greek culture and be representative of the Greek people. *Τα Δύο Αδέρφια* exemplifies these aims, and as in Psycharis's other novels, there is an emphasis on the correct use of words. The emphasis on the language, the analysis of Greek people and their characteristics in different parts of Greece and in Constantinople, justify the characterisation of this novel as 'national' in the subtitle.

*Τα Δύο Αδέρφια* is a semi-autobiographical novel written as a 'Bildungsroman', at least with regards the early stages of the novel, presenting the development of two brothers. The narrator, who is one of the two brothers, follows their transition from childhood into adulthood. The two main characters were born and bred in Constantinople, eventually taking different paths in their lives. The narrator dedicates himself to writing literature, glorifying the Muse, while his brother devotes his time and energy to women. The narration alternates between episodes concerning the lives and development of these two: of the narrator Asteris, and his twin brother Astras. It starts from the brothers' childhood, when they were nine years old, since this is normally the age when people start having a clear concept of their place in the world. The two brothers grew up in an affluent environment, in a house in Constantinople, with private tutors for ancient Greek, and friends from respectable families.<sup>10</sup> Their family, and those of their friends, belonged to the typical upper class of Constantinople. However, the narrator distances himself from his acquaintances and describes with irony the attitudes and customs of the 'Πολίτες' (Greek citizens of

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<sup>10</sup>The house described in detail in this novel, as well as in other of Psycharis's novels, was his own family home: "[τ]ο πατρικό μου σπίτι τόχω περιγραμμένο, κάμαρα κάμαρα και σκαλί σκαλί, σ'Τα δύο Αδέρφια" (in Zolotas 1928: 847n).

Constantinople), who had inevitably been influenced by the Oriental mentality as a result of their cohabitation with the Turkish population of the city.

The two brothers were still young when they started to experience their sexual awakening. Asteris, the narrator, initiates himself through literature, reading foreign novels of the period which make him understand his sexuality, while Astras experiences an admiration for and attraction towards the female presence, and feels the urge to conquer as many females as possible: “Ερχεται πάντα μια ώρα όπου θα ξυπνήσης. Αδιάφορο ποιος σε ξυπνά. Έτσι μου έτυχε και μένα με το ξεχασμένο το βιβλίο” (52) [...] “Την ίδια στιγμή κι ο αδερφούλης, καθώς μου το μολόγησε σα γυρίσαμε στο Γαλατά, τρόμαζε και χαιρότανε στάλλο πάτωμα με τη Λιλή” (53). The female presence, ‘real’ or ‘fictional’, becomes the symbol of love and beauty for both of them. When the two brothers reach twenty-one years of age, they know their vocations. The narrator decides to leave Constantinople and to dedicate himself to literature. Astras chooses as his vocation the exploration of love. They both fall in love, during that summer of entering into adulthood, with Myrtoula, who inspires their devotion. Astras sees her as a female beauty and companion, Asteris as the ideal inspiration for the creation of poetry. Astras marries Myrtoula, but their union does not last because she dies from a sickness which is caused by her strong passionate love. As the narrator explains, she was destined to burn, not consumed by an actual fire, such as the one which had destroyed her home and deprived her of her family when she was very young, but by the fire of love, leaving her husband bereaved in his turn. She remains, though, throughout the narrative, the Muse who guides Asteris, who often has visions of her ghost.

Before Myrtoula’s death, while Astras was living a married life, the narrator went to Athens, a place he considered appropriate for the cultivation of art, and there,

he wrote his ‘masterpiece’. Just as Astras loses his loved one, so Asteris loses his manuscript, which gets burned after he leaves it next to his favourite writing place, under a big pine tree.<sup>11</sup> This incident marks the end of his stay in Athens. We see that the lives of the two brothers follow similar paths: the narrator loses his work after his brother loses his beloved wife, as they both have to go through the experience of loss and recovery: “Έλεγα πως τι κρίμα να περνούνε, να χάνονται πέρα για πέρα όλα τα ωραία και τα καλά. Μαζί με τη σκέψη της Μυρτούλας μ’ έδερνε και ο καημός του ταφιασμένου μου του έργου [...]” (170). They both remain faithful to that first real love, the one still communicating with Myrtoula in his thoughts, having her as his Muse, the other as her husband, because he never remarries despite all the relationships that were to follow in his life.

The narrator continues his topographical itinerary in the Greek cultural centres, finding refuge in Lefkada, while Astras remains in Constantinople and is looked after by a young servant, Frosoula, who becomes his lover. From then onwards, the two brothers go from one adventure to the other, each one in his field. Astras falls in love with many different women and Asteris tests his strengths in creative writing. Frosoula, who even assists Astras in his various sexual conquests, is the constant presence and anchor in his life. Astras dies before the narrator, while still quite young. He drowns in an effort to meet his last love, Aphrodite. Asteris decides to reinstate Frosoula, the loyal servant, touched by her true love for his brother. He marries her as a gesture of appreciation for her love and dedication, which for him expressed simply what was important in life. The lives of the two brothers are thus intertwined, sharing the same loves and disappointments, and being forever united, even after death. The author puts forward the idea that the desire to conquer all

<sup>11</sup>This brings to mind Psycharis’s collection of short stories with the title: *Στον Ίσκιό του Πλάτάνου* (1911), in the prologue of which he mentions that Greek people tended to enjoy reading underneath the shade of a tree (Psycharis 1911: 10).



women is compared with the multitude of inspirations competing in the poet's mind to take definite shape.

### 1. An unknown Introduction

Vrettakos's 1955 edition of *Ta Δυο Αδέρφια*, published by Makedonikes Ekdoseis, was an attempt to faithfully create a corpus of all Psycharis's novels and follows the first edition of the novel by Estia (1910-1). However, both editions omit the 'introduction' ("αφιερωτικό γραμματάκι"), an extensive document that formed part of the first manuscript version of the novel in 1903 (it is included in the Appendix, see also Introduction and Chapter One to this thesis). This letter offers valuable information regarding Psycharis's views on literature. It was published with some alterations in *Noumas* 1904, 77: 7-12, 78: 5-8, 79: 4-8. The *Noumas* version, which is slightly longer than the original, is also included in Psycharis 1997a, in pages 312-36. The prologue-letter is dedicated to Katia Episkopopoulos, wife of Nikos Episkopopoulos (Nicolas Ségur), who had a prominent career in Greece and in France. The dedication is understandable in the light of the novel's emphasis on the role of the Woman as Muse who guides the poet.

The author explains that his novel was not for young girls. He claims that he tried to portray Greek society in Athens and in Constantinople, and the faults in the characters of these people, which were clear to the eye of the careful observer (κ'). He argues that most Greeks were like children as was the Greek nation itself, "[ε]μείς στην Ελλάδα, μόλις γεννηθήκαμε. Μόλις ξυπνούμε. Και ξυπνούμε από ύπνο βαρί. Ξυπνούμε από τον ύπνο της σκλαβιάς [...]" (κγ'). Furthermore, he explains that even though the constraints of the period would probably direct novelists to write a historical novel, tracing the changes in the psychology of the Greek people since the

revolution (since it was impossible to ignore this landmark in Greek history), he wanted to show instead the cultural development of the people and to define their true potential and faults in order to pave a path for national progress. Thus he explained that the narrator of his novel had passed through a period of perpetual movement analogous to that of the Greek people. He also views the characters as they grow up, travel, try to gain an understanding of their own identity and leave their mark on the world (κε').

An important point made in this introduction is Psycharis's idea that one of the Greek people's faults was the use of *katharevousa*, in Constantinople in particular, betraying a tendency to give in to pedantic attitudes: "[...] και η καθαρεύουσα που μας φαίνεται το άκρον άωτο του πολιτισμού, μοιάζει πολύ περισσότερο σαν απομεινάρι της καταραμένης της σκλαβιάς" (κη'). The author believed that the use of an unnatural language, like *katharevousa*, prevented people from forming a clear idea of who they were, which meant that they lived in a state of denial and confusion, probably convinced that the language they used would demonstrate their direct link with the ancient Greeks. That is why the role of the novelist takes on greater significance; through his novels he could help people in their progress towards self-awareness, and show them that they should not be afraid to employ the language that was used in everyday communication. However, the same people depicted in his novels would also help the novelist develop his skills, and find his own identity as a writer. As the author concludes: "Κάθε Ρωμιός που θα τον ψυχολογήσουμε, θα μας πλουτίσει και μ' ένα καινούριο πρωτότυπο ρομάντσο. Από κει θα μας βγούνε Τολστόηδες, Μπαλζάκηδες και Φλωμπέρηδες, που καλό θάτανε να τους ξεχνούσαμε κάπου κάπου, για να προσέξουμε στους δικούς μας, τους τιποτένιους. Είναι το ρομάντζο έργο εθνικό, εθνικό και το διάβασμά του" (λ'). The ideas of self-awareness

and the formation of identity, which are discussed in the introduction, are central to the novel. Within the concept of identity also lies the Apollonian and Dionysian division that is exemplified in the attitude of the two brothers.

## 2. Apollonian and Dionysian division as represented by the two brothers

Each of the two main characters operates primarily in terms of one of the two elements that guide people's actions and thoughts. Asteris is motivated by his intellectual needs and his brother by his physical ones. This division is very schematic, as people in real life are complex with many different characteristics but it serves to point out the author's analysis of the human soul:

Φτάνει τώρα να μη με ρωτάτε ποιος είτανε ο αδερφός μου ο Αστράς· ούτε αδερφό ούτε αδερφή μου χάρισε ο ουρανός. Βρέθηκε ανάγκη να φιλοσοφήσω, να ιδεολογήσω και δω την ψυχή που μέσα της συγκέντρωνε δυο τάσεις διαφορετικές, άρα να τη χωρίσω σε δυο ρόλους, που έτσι γίνονται παραστατικότεροι ο καθένας (Zolotas 1928: 833, the emphasis as it is in the text).<sup>12</sup>

The narrator presents himself as the quieter of the two brothers, having a contemplative nature and a tendency to create stories in his head. Astras, on the other hand, is described as the 'star' of the family, being very handsome and sociable, and favoured particularly by their mother. The two brothers were both charismatic, the one functioned more through his intellect, while the other was ruled by his emotions,

<sup>12</sup>Psycharis believed that the novelist always portrays episodes of his own life and renders his own emotions, but he makes the portrayal in such a way that it concerns other people's lives also: "στην παγκόσμια φιλολογία τον εαυτό σου να ζουγραφίζεις, και μάλιστα ναλλάζεις με κάθε σου ζουγραφιά τον εαυτό σου, περνά για πλούτος" (ibid: 833-34). The author in all of his novels, tries to analyse his characters, their thoughts and their motives; in most cases, though, the characters remain incomplete, as they do not give the impression of people that one could actually meet in real life. In this novel also, the two brothers have characteristics of Psycharis's own personality, but their depiction does not succeed in sustaining them as something more than constructions for the purpose of the story. There seems to be a limited presentation of their consciousness, their inner life.

and was able to manipulate other people's emotions as well: "[τ]έτοια διαφορά ίσια ίσια είχαμε αναμεταξύ μας, ταδερφάκι μου και γώ, που όσα έπλαθε σε μένα ο νους, τάπλαθε σε κείνονε η καρδιά" (3). However, as the narrator explains, they both aimed to experience the beauty of life. For Asteris, this beauty was an abstract love of the Muse who gave inspiration to the poet to help him in his creation; for Astras it was a physical love, always related to the female presence:

Κ' οι δυο μας αγαπήσαμε όλη μας τη ζωή· εκείνος αγάπησε τη Γυναίκα, εγώ αγάπησα τη Μούσα· είναι το ίδιο. Πονούσε η καρδιά του, ενεργούσε όμως κι ο νους του άλλο τόσο· εμένα ο νους μου ενεργούσε, μα πονούσε συνάμα κ' η καρδιά μου. Αγάπη δημιουργούσε η ψυχή του, ενώ ποίηση δημιουργούσε η δική μου. Κι όπως εγώ έπλαθα, όπως συνταίριαζα τα ποιήματά μου, εκείνος έπλαθε κάθε του αγάπη, λες και την καθεμιά σου τη συνταίριαζε με τέχνη για να γίνη ένα ποίημα η καθεμιά (4).

The novelistic technique of creating a fictional brother is employed also in *Το ταξίδι μου* (1888).<sup>13</sup> In one of the chapters of the book, the narrator introduces his brother Yannis, who is a harmless giant, absorbed in the activity of eating large quantities of food. Thus, in this case also, the brother represents the physical element, while the narrator remains preoccupied with intellectual pursuits. In *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897), on the other hand, Yanniris – the main character – incorporates both the intellectual and the physical element, in equally large proportions. He is a remarkable writer and a great conqueror of women. If we can accept Yanniris as an exceptional personality, in *Τα Δύο Αδέρφια*, by contrast, there is something unbelievable in the portrayal of the two characters.

The narrator is presented as the more stable and complete personality, while his brother's excessive erotic tendencies turn him into a caricature. It is difficult to

<sup>13</sup>Psycharis did not have any brothers or sisters in real life.

sympathise with an adult, who after his wife's death does nothing else in life except fall in love with many different women, and on occasions just drag them into his bed from pure lust, unless we perceive this activity allegorically as the constant efforts of the writer to experiment with different forms and expressive modes. There is no depth in the character, no real emotional development, except the emotions expressed in his diary, where he addresses his loved one lamenting her loss. In the following extract, the author manages to convey the emotional side of this character, who has been described in the beginning of the novel as a sweet soul (see p. 7). The imaginary letter to his late wife exemplifies his sweet nature, and conveys his suffering with which the reader can identify:

Σήμερα που με βλέπεις, έχω γύρω τριγύρω μου όλα τα μικρά  
ταντικείμενα που είτανε δικά σου, το κουτί όπου έβαζες τα  
γάντια σου, το πράσινό σου το μεταξωτό φουστάνι, που σου  
πήγαινε τόσο καλά, που είσουνα μέσα τόσο νόστιμη συνάμα  
κι ωραία, το χτένι σου, που μυρίζει ακόμη τω μαλλιώνε σου  
τη μυρωδιά, τα παπουτσάκια σου τα μικρούτσικα, το  
πορτοφόλι που τόπαιρνες πάντα μαζί σου, και στις  
τσεπούλες του χαρτάκια με του χεριού σου το  
γράψιμο!...(155).

Apart from that period, Astras's behaviour marks him out as a shallow, even immoral person. He takes pleasure in stealing other people's wives or seducing innocent girls in order to satisfy his own sexual hunger, which must be a result of his emotional loneliness. This explanation is not adequately stressed though in the novel, and, therefore, the unfolding of Astras's adventures turn him into a most unlikeable character. It is as if the author aims to undermine implicitly the significance of the physical element as opposed to the intellectual.

Throughout the narrative, there is an emphasis on this division between heart and mind. Astras aims to live his life, inspiring love in others, especially in women,

while Asteris strives to inspire readers with his intellectual work, his novels. Finally, Asteris's apprenticeship in life includes his brother's apprenticeship, as he interprets the brother's story, and makes it the theme of his novel. Thus the brothers need each other: Asteris needs the brother's story to show his talent, while Astras needs the narrator's (Asteris's) interpretation of his story. However, since the novelist survives at the end and takes over the other brother's life, the author admits indirectly that the role of the novelist is more important than that of the lover.

### 3. The multiple functions of the 'mirroring' process

As mentioned already, another important motif in the narrative is the symbol of the mirror, which reinforces the dualistic division exemplified by the two brothers and their different characteristics in the process of reflection. This reflection has multiple expressions: it involves the issues of language, Greek identity, as defined through the different characters described in the novel, and the process of creating a novel. I will clarify how it is presented in each case.

With regard to the language, Psycharis believed that the novel should reflect the language used by people in everyday life (see Chapter One). In *Ta Δυο Αδέρφια*, as mentioned above, we note the emphasis placed by the author on correct expression in the narration, an important element in the novel.<sup>14</sup> Psycharis's theoretical views regarding the role of the writer were in accordance with those expressed in this novel by one of its two main characters, and clarify the term 'εθνικό'. According to the author, the ideal writer was like a mirror: "Ένας μεγάλος συγγραφέας είναι σαν καθρέφτης: στα λόγια του μέσα ο καθένας βλέπει την ίδια του την εικόνα" (1902b: 156, written in 1886, see also Chapter One). As Asteris, the narrator of the novel,

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<sup>14</sup>See for example: "Φλογωμένο σας τον είπα· κάλλια φλογοδαρμένος του ταιριάζει [...]" (7).



expresses the same wish, that is to write “a book for the people, for our own people” (1910-1: 303), we can see that Psycharis’s programmatic aims remained unaltered for more than twenty years. The author never really followed any trends or literary movements blindly, since he believed that he was the trendsetter and his plan was to establish the demotic as the language of Greek prose. As a result, even though the novel discusses a certain system of class distinction existing in Constantinople and Athens, the language used by the different characters does not denote a distinguishing mark of their respective classes. In that respect, the language of the novel aims to ‘reflect’ what Psycharis considered a uniform national identity.

The mirror also reflects the society in which he places his characters, as will be discussed in the following section. Furthermore, the author plays with the motif of the mirror, which is turned towards him, in a kind of introspection and desire to discover his true identity. As in most of his novels, Psycharis wanted to define the Greek characteristics in himself, and in other people, and examine the differences between Greeks and other Europeans. He wants and hopes that the reader will see himself/herself as s/he really is and so his role is to uncover the hidden reality, the mask as is referred to in the narrative.

The novel begins by describing the narrator’s family, in an attempt to trace his roots; some of the episodes in the narrative are a fictionalised account of the real author’s family.<sup>15</sup> It is characteristic of Psycharis’s introspective approach that he should describe not only his own personality but, through the process of mirroring, present to the Greek public the elements that could be considered essentially Greek,

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<sup>15</sup>“ΣΤα [Δ]ύο Αδέρφια έβγαλα κάπως το πορτραίτο του ίδιου του μπαμπά (σ. 2-3). Φιλοσόφησα όμως τον άνθρωπο πιο πολύ παρά που τον ψυχολόγησα· τον ιδεολόγησα κυριολεκτικά. Τον έστησα για σύμβολο, κι όχι καθαυτό για πρόσωπο. Αληθινά κι από τη ζωή παρμένα είναι μονάχα δύο επεισόδια, το επεισόδιο του αμαξιού (σ. 43), και οι έρωτές του με τη Σμίθαινα την αρμενοπούλα, όπου όλα όλα είναι πιστά [...]” (in Zolotas 1928: 833).

the peculiarities that he noticed in different Greek communities, as well as describing the contrasts he found with people in Europe. As is pointed out by the narrator:

Ο υλικός ο καθρέφτης που τόσες φορές μας παρουσιάζει την εικόνα μας την ηθική, όταν άξαφνα βλέπουμε ή στο πρόσωπο ενός άλλου ανθρώπου ή σε κανένα ξένο αντικείμενο, και συγκρίνουμε το εγώ μας με το πράμα ή με το πλάσμα το ξένο, έμελλε ο καθρέφτης αφτός που τον ανταμώνουμε παντού, ακόμη πιο κατάσαρκα να με κάμη να ψυχολογήσω τον εαυτό μου (211).

Although the novel is structured around the alternating stories of the two brothers (i.e. a sexual adventure for Astras followed by a trial experienced by Asteris in relation to his work as a writer), in the second half of the narrative there seems to be more emphasis on Astras's life. This happens because the narrator meets Frosoula after his brother's death and hears the story of their life in Constantinople from her. Thus from that part onwards the focus is turned on Astras's life, with Frosoula as narrator and the original narrator assuming the role of the narratee. Furthermore, the narrator takes the role of his late brother by taking Frosoula to live with him. Thus it appears as if the story of the one brother is nearing its end, while the other's is just starting.<sup>16</sup> In this part of the story, Frosoula recounts to Asteris her first meeting with his brother; the narrator (Asteris) also comments on his brother's actions while Frosoula recounts her memories of Astras. However, it should be pointed out that the narrator reports very little of Frosoula's direct speech; he chooses to mask her speech with his own words and tone of narration instead of allowing her the chance to speak for herself. Thus Psycharis misses the opportunity to represent faithfully the speech of an ordinary Greek person in accordance with his aims. Nevertheless, if we notice one

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<sup>16</sup>Perhaps, this is the reason that the narrative loses its balance, and Astras's adventures seem excessive and unbelievable, as they are not counter-balanced by his brother's.

extract from the novel carefully, we will understand how the process of mirroring also helps the characterisation and the sharing of roles in the novel:

Κοίταξε ο Αστράς προς το εγγλέζικο σπίτι. Δεν είδε τίποτα, μήτε τουαλέττες, μήτε ντυσίματα, μήτε κοκόνες. Γύρισε από το αντίθετο μέρος, δηλαδή προς το σπίτι το περίφημο της Σίλβιας, της πρώτης του αγάπης [...] Ας τα πάρη ο διάλος! Εμείς άλλο κυνήγι ζητούμε. Κάτω μεριά, επειδή τετράγωνος ο μπαξές, υψωνότανε πελώριος τοίχος, δίχως παράθυρο, μ' ένα φεγγίτη μόνο αψηλά. Χωρίς να το θέλη, έρριξε και κει μια ματιά, ξεχάσαντας ολότελα πως είτανε κατάστημα καπουτσίνιοι. Ανάθεμάν τους και δάφτους, τρεις αναθεμάν τους! Άξαφνα παίρνει άλλο δρόμο η ματιά του. Μπα! Και τι πράμα είναι τούτο; Καλέ, πώς δεν πρόσεξε ίσια με τότες; Πώς γίνεται; Κοπελλούδι με μια φρεσκάδα στα μάγουλα, στο πρόσωπο, να, φρεσκάδα καϊσιού! Είτανε, φίλε μου, η Φροσούλα που συγύριζε την κάμαρα της μάννας της [...] θωρά λοιπόν άξαφνα τον Αστρά που χάσκει, που σεργιανίζει, που διόλου πια θλιμμένος δε φαίνεται. Χάρηκε το κορίτσι. – “Αχ! Ο θεός να μη μου το σχωρέση! μου έλεγε. Δεν έπρεπε, τέτοιο πράμα να το κάμω. Να, τον αφέντη, τον αφέντη κοίταζα κι από τη χαρά μου γέλασα!” (179-80).<sup>17</sup>

Astras looks at Frosoula and then she looks at him, as if mirroring his actions and thoughts. In this extract, which is part of a larger section in the novel, Frosoula recounts her thoughts to Asteris, and Asteris, the main narrator of the novel, recounts the story of their meeting to the readers. In this paragraph the narrator wants us to follow Astras's view and his thoughts as they are presented through Frosoula's recollection. He does not manage to leave Astras alone with his thoughts, though, but intervenes and guides the narration: “Είτανε, φίλε μου η Φροσούλα [...]”. This means that the narrator cannot escape his omniscient status, but it also indicates that there is a sharing of roles between the characters. The narrator's role is taken both by Asteris and Frosoula, although the latter's voice is appropriated by that of the male narrator, and Asteris also identifies with his brother's role. The narrator has explained earlier in

<sup>17</sup>The activity of looking and observing is expressed seven times in this extract: ‘κοίταξε’, ‘έρριξε μια ματιά’, ‘παίρνει δρόμο η ματιά του’, ‘πρόσεξε’, ‘θωρά’ ‘δε φαίνεται’, ‘κοίταζα’.

the narrative, for the sake of readers, that he had changed part of Frosoula's account in order to make it more coherent: "Κράτησα μερικές από τις φρασούλες της, και βέβαια πως θα το προτιμούσα να μπορούσα να είναι όλο το δήγημα δικό της, όλο με τα λόγια της συθεμένο. Μα δε στάθηκε βολετό, επειδή συχνά χρειάστηκε να προστέσω ή να ζηγήσω κάτι πράματα, που δεν τα κάτεχε ή που δεν τα ψυχολογούσε κάθε φορά όπως νομίζω πως αξίζανε" (147). Astras also keeps a diary expressing his feelings about the loss of his beloved Myrtoula; and his brother Asteris, who presents some extracts to readers, is also a reader of this diary (see p. 149). Astras is the principal actor in the narrative but when he dies his place is taken by the narrator by dint of his marrying Frosoula. Thus there are three narrators overall in this novel, the two brothers and the faithful servant Frosoula; and the two brothers alternate their roles. The sharing of roles or identities reinforces the dualistic mode of the novel, which suggests that self-awareness is gained only in relation to others. In relevance to the above points, one could consult also the analysis of Hamon (1981: 188-89), regarding the motif of the mirror in which the character is both the observer and part of the scene that is observed.

Finally, the mirror as a symbol also refers to the narrative process. The technique of the internal mirroring in the narrative process is created through the inclusion of extracts from the brother's diary. This is similar to the diary of the fictional brother in the unpublished novel discussed in the previous chapter (for the function of the diary in a novel see Samouil 1998). The novelist within the novel is a device frequently employed by Psycharis in his novels, and it reveals the strong narcissistic element of his work. As Yannakakis explains, "'metafiction' constitutes a form of textual narcissism, in the sense that the object of reference of a text is not reality but the very activity of writing a novel" (1990: 77). Asteris, as a representative

of all novelists, strives to produce the masterpiece which will exemplify the power of his mind and reflect the essence of life. Significantly, the author also incorporates within the narration, the story of the Spanish poet Lope de Vega, which is supposed to act as an advance mention of Asteris's pursuits. The story is didactic, multiplying the meaning of the novel, the pursuit of beauty in artistic creation.

When Lope de Vega was young, he noticed a book in his father's library entitled 'The Star of Beauty'. The title captured his attention, but as he felt embarrassed to ask his father to give him the book, he decided to examine it the next day on his own, taking his time. The following day, though, the book was not in its place, because his father had sold it. The poet felt such sorrow at losing what he considered a valuable treasure, that he spent a lifetime trying to write something important, something worthy of the title of that lost book which had inspired such emotions in his heart. Yet he always felt inadequate to the task and his work never seemed good enough to him to bear the title of his first love in life. For this reason, he wrote many books but never found the 'star of beauty' again. Similarly, in Psycharis's novel, the writer's anxiety is that his work is outside the realms of real poetry, which is the poetry of life; that he is incapable of rendering the actions and feelings people experienced in real life, but his work remains a shapeless production of 'paper life': "Καλέ, τι ξέρουμε μεις οι ποιητάδες, εμείς οι γραφιάδες, από τη ζωή; Μα τι ξέρουμε κι από την ποίηση;" (144).

Poetry is the ideal condition, which the discourse of the novel attempts to render, and is equivalent to love. Asteris learns the meaning of poetry, and Astras the meaning of love, from Homer. The narrative suggests, though, that both of them were inadequate when compared to the uneducated female, personified by Frosoula. Her love is stronger than Astras's, and her poetry of life incomparable, as she produces the

true 'star of beauty' by giving birth to Constantinos, the narrator's son. Thus Asteris and Astras, whose names play on the theme of the star (αστέρι), as in the title of the coveted book, find true beauty, when they combine their forces, love and poetry, with the help of Frosoula, who seems to reflect the different ideals of each brother in different sections of the narrative. With these self-referential elements referring to the inspiration, and the desire to master creative writing, the text reproduces small-scale reflections of the main objectives of the author in this novel.

#### **4. Greek society and culture of the period as portrayed in the novel**

Through the two brothers and their lives, the author aims to portray Greek society and present his ideas on the 'Greek character' and culture. The narrator travels from Constantinople to Athens and then to the Ionian islands, and through this itinerary the author presents the different linguistic idioms and customs in each area. The particular political, social and cultural situation in each of them determines the lifestyle of the Greek communities that inhabit them and give them their distinct character.

In particular, Psycharis portrays the Greek community of Constantinople, and through context or direct commentary presents his ideas on Greek language and culture. As I have mentioned in the introduction, the author lived in Constantinople from the age of six until he was nine years old, before going to live with his grandmother in Marseille (see Psycharis 1993). Later, in 1886, he travelled back there as an adult, for the purpose of studying the Greek dialects of the area. Constantinople is the setting of two of his novels, the one under examination and *Tóvειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897), but the city also features in the rest of his novels. In both novels, the author portrays the city of his childhood years with a degree of nostalgia but without



any sign of idealisation, as was the case in much ‘ethographic’ writing of the period. He was able to analyse the people with his acute critical skills, and with the knowledge and the objectivity of someone who considered France as his second home. In addition, a lot of the expressions in this novel, as well as in *Τόνειρο*, were characteristic of the Greek used in Constantinople, because according to the narrator’s own admission, he was a ‘Politis’ at heart: “Ποιος όμως κι από μακριά δεν τα βλέπει τα σουσουμία μου τα πολιτικά· εγώ αν είμαι τίποτις, τίποτις άλλο δηλαδή παρά ένας άνθρωπος σαν όλους τους ανθρώπους. Πολίτης είμαι το κάτω κάτω. Μου έμεινε το πολιτικό κολλημένο στο πετσί [...]” (129).<sup>18</sup>

Firstly, he presents the people in Constantinople as interested in the various expressions of love, even from an early age: “Σύντροφό μας, συντρόφισσά μας δε θυμούμαι από κείνο τον καιρό, που να μην ερωτεβότανε κάθε τόσο” (5). The men, in particular, even in old age, were going after young girls and making fools of themselves. This proved that the Greeks of Constantinople had fiery temperaments, and followed their physical instincts, even at the expense of ‘losing face’. However, they were also proud and arrogant despite all of their weaknesses. The two brothers’ friends are portrayed as typical upper-class families of Constantinople: one such family, Miltiadi Beis and his wife Elego, exemplify the attitudes prevalent in Greeks of the period.<sup>19</sup> The father was the lord and master of the house, and everyone was meant to obey him and attend to his every wish. Psycharis satirises the family situation, in hilarious scenes, that describe the subservience of the women towards the head of the family, while the latter in his turn, is similarly subservient to the Turkish master: “Γύριζε ο μπέης απ’ όζω – ίσως από κανέναν άλλο μπέη, Τούρκο, που μπορεί και να του έγλυψε τα πόδια ο δικός μας. Ο μπέης! Να σου κ’ οι δούλοι όρθιοι, στην

<sup>18</sup>The Greek of the area is indicated in the words: ‘σουσουμία’, ‘τίποτις’, ‘πετσί’.

<sup>19</sup>‘Bey’ is a polite term used by Turks when addressing or talking about men of a certain social standing, and it is used both for fellow-Turks and for Greeks.

μπασιά, να του πάρουνε το παλτό του, το μπαστούνι του· στο διάβα του, μόλις μια ματιά τους έρριχνε ο μπέης. Κατέβαινε ο μπέης στο πρόγευμα· η κοκόνια Ελέγκω ανταρεμένη· – ‘Δημήτρη! Πρόσεχε, τι θέλει ο μπέης’ ” (19). The author comments also that the ‘Polites’ behaved as if they were the centre of the world, and their words and actions were significant for the rest of the community. However, this trait was true of all Greeks, who wanted to appear more important than other people, as if some inherited mentality made them believe that they were ‘gods’.

Kallirrhoe Siganou Parren also portrayed the same type of family values in her trilogy of novels “Τα Βιβλία της Αυγής”, giving a more liberal, feminist perspective though having the younger female characters questioning the situation, in accordance with her feminist agenda (see Psarra 1999). Psycharis’s female characters, on the contrary, do not show any signs of challenging their husbands. Their only resistance was when they were unfaithful to them, and even then they followed male predilections. As the narrator of *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* observes, everyone wore a mask in Constantinopolitan society; they all played a role as if there had been prior mutual agreement between them as to the distribution of roles. They all wanted to appear as if they had good manners and followed the European trends. They tried to embrace, in particular, French customs but these adopted manners did not always manage to cover up their primitive urges: “Για τούτο, υποθέτω, δε θα φορούσανε πάντα τη μάσκα και θα υπήρχανε κάμποσες στιγμές, όπου από του καθενός τους μέσα το πετσί, όξω κι όξω θα πετιότανε η πρωτόπλαστη ορμή τους, ο άγριος ανυπόταχτος άνθρωπος, το θειό που ταποσκέπαζε η μόδα” (46).

Thus, through the story of the two brothers, the novel presents the developing urban society of Constantinople. It presents the fiery and arrogant manners of people, and the importance attached to financial wealth, which sometimes led to commercial

disasters. The family situation is portrayed as unbalanced, having the male at its centre, and the woman serving his needs or following his example. A blind belief that everything foreign was good made people imitate attitudes which weakened the traditional bonds between members of the society. This type of society showed no clear idea of where it came from, and where it was heading, because the veil of imitation covered every original expression, even cultural production. As the narrator claims, instead of cultivating the strong elements in their culture, people abandoned anything that was indigenous, and embraced everything foreign: “Απόδειξη, που τα βυζαντινά, όπως μου έλεγε κάποιος, τα καταφρονούσανε όσο τα καταφρονούσε η Ευρώπη· τα προσέζανε, όταν άρχισε η Ευρώπη να τα προσέχει” (208).<sup>20</sup> Kallirrhoe Parren also makes the same observation, in a part of her novel *Η Χειραφετημένη*, which offers a condensed critique of the Greek society of Constantinople. Her remarks are very similar to those encountered in Psycharis’s novel, pointing out the two main problems in the mentality of Constantinopolitans, the influence of the Ottoman Empire (which had inherited faults from the Byzantine tradition) and the desire to mimic European ways.

The narrator of *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* also insisted that the citizens of Constantinople were secretive people, who did not express their true wishes and aims, but instead ‘shouted’ about other unimportant issues. He explained that this was probably the result of their long period of enslavement, which had made them very cautious. In that respect, hypocrisy and mistrust reigned in all social exchanges, and the relations between people were not based on solid foundations. Even worse, people did not even know their true selves:

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<sup>20</sup>Indicatively, in a similar manner, Psycharis satirises the way Greeks viewed French people in his short story “Δυο φίλοι”, from the collection *Στον Ίσκιο του Πλατάνου* (1911: 196-211).

Δε φάνηκε τέτοιος Πολίτης, γιατί φοβούμαι μήπως ο Ρωμιός κοιτάζει τον εαυτό του μονάχα. Κι αν τον κοίταζε τουλάχιστο με μάτι προσεχτικό, παράπονο δε θα είχαμε· αξίζει ο εαυτός του να κοιταχτή. Μα τον κοιτάζει αχαμνά· ο ακαλλιέργητος δε φροντίζει για καθρέφτη, κι ο καλλιεργημένος, που καθρεφτίζεται σε καθρέφτες φερμένους από την Εβρώπη, βάζει φτειασίδι, για να φαντάξη μπροστά στον ξένο τον καθρέφτη (38-9).

As mentioned above, this was one of the reasons for which the novel was written; by analysing himself, his family, and his compatriots, the author was seeking to find out his true identity, and escape the role assigned to him by the prevailing social attitudes. He wanted to discover what lay behind his own ‘mask’, and also help his compatriots in their introspection to realise their strengths. Psycharis believed that Greeks did not use their intellect sufficiently in order to be able to progress in accordance with their traditions, but remained enmeshed in insignificant everyday issues, an opinion shared by Parren. In order to emphasise this point, he makes his narrator praise instead the Swiss as hard-working, liberal and civilised: “Διαβάζουνε, γράφουνε, καταλαβαίνουνε, συζητούνε ως κ’ οι πιο παρακατιανοί. Σ’ όλες τις χώρες, απ’ όλα τα χωριά, βλέπεις και βγαίνει ένα πνέμα, ήσυχο, γερό, που ήμερα κι αποφασισμένα, ειρηνικά κι αλύγιστα, θέλει και κατορθώνει τη Λεφτεριά.” (209). The narrator was hoping to find this breath of liberal air and of cultivated spirit in the capital city of the free Greek state, Athens, which was the second stage in his itinerary, but he quickly became disillusioned.

Athens represented the middle ground between new ideas and old beliefs, and for the people of Constantinople it seemed a place to aspire to, because it was free. Characteristically, in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, the old servant, Stamatis, said longingly to Yanniris: “Εμείς την Ελλάδα την ακούμε” (1897: 225), and for them, Athens represented the whole of Greece in those days. Asteris goes to Athens with a desire to find poetry there, meaning balance, harmony and creativity, in all aspects of life.

What he finds though is not very different from the situation in Constantinople. According to the narrator, the Athenians imitated whatever customs and tendencies were considered European, denying their true identity. The author satirises the lack of social awareness and confused identities. He derides the novelist Papdiamantis, who was indifferent to his appearance,<sup>21</sup> and another character called Tsigomagas (or Sigomas), who could be Syngros, a national benefactor. In particular, Sigomagas attracts Psycharis's scorn as the archetypal, devious, and cunning Greek:

Περίεργο πόσο είχε αλλάξει ο κ. Τσιγκομάγκας από την Πόλη στην Αθήνα. Θάλλαξε, ότι μπήκε στο βαπόρι που τον έφερε [...] Μη βλέπετε το εξωτερικό του, τώρα στην Αθήνα όπου προσπαθούσε να δείχνη λεβεντιά καρδιάς, ψυχής ξαστεριά. Όσο ξεκούμπωτη κι α φορούσε τη ρεντιγκότα του, η καρδούλα του από μέσα κουμπωμένη, κουμποσταβρωμένη, σαν τη σταμπουλίνα μας την πολιτική (123).<sup>22</sup>

The fluidity of identities suggested in the above example reinforces the novel's general idea that one can only understand oneself by examining one's reflection in other people, ideas or places.

As is repeated in the narrative, the lack of distinct identity awareness was apparent in the use of language in both of these communities. The language spoken by the people was a confusing mixture of *katharevousa* with Turkish and French expressions, “μόνο που στην Αθήνα βάζουνε τούρκικα λιγώτερα και περισσότερα γαλλικά” (85). Psycharis attributed the negative characteristics of ‘Polites’ and their lack of literary development to the centuries of enslavement, even though the accusation seems like a sweeping generalisation, which disregards the Phanariot

<sup>21</sup>In the text, he appears as ‘Diamantoulis’, hardly disguising the identity of the real person.

<sup>22</sup>In this case also, as in the description of sior Miltiadias Balkas, the ironical tone manages to create an interesting description, where the characteristics of the person are attributed synecdochically to the way his coat is worn.

poetry of the eighteenth century, because of the language in which it was written<sup>23</sup>: “Η τέχνη θέλει λεφτεριά. Καλός, κακός, τουλάχιστο ανεξάρτητος ο τόπος. Στην Πόλη μας φιλολογία δεν έχει, γιατί αυτή δε φυτρώνει κάτω από την πλάκα της σκλαβιάς” (94).<sup>24</sup> This remark reveals the author’s disappointment at the fact that such a glorious city still seemed to be suffering the effects of Ottoman rule, which had also led to the adoption of *katharevousa*. Psycharis always attributed the use of *katharevousa* to the enslavement period which deprived the nation of its self-awareness (see Appendix). Significantly the same type of comment had appeared in another of Psycharis’s novels, *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (published in 1921 in *Noumas* but written in 1899): “[...] Εδώ δε φάνηκε ποτέξ μήτε ξένος ποιητής. Όνομα έχει μοναχά η ξερή μας η Πόλη, όνομα καμωμένο από σφαγές, από δάκρια κι από αίμα [...]” (722: 88).

In Athens, the narrator found at least some signs of cultural and social progress, with its cast of intellectuals and merchants beginning to flourish and paving the way for a new type of society. He perceived overall a stronger class-system operating there and, as he explained, it was not a single society, but many different ones: the aristocracy, the middle class, the working class which was the majority of the population, and the lowest class which consisted of the very poor. He expressed a preference for the middle class, which for him included the intellectuals:

Κάτω από δάφτους, αρχίζει αμέσως η τάξη που λέγεται μεσιανή, και που είναι αποτελεσμένη από καλούς, τίμιους, χρυσούς ανθρώπους, γιατί ο μεσοταξίτης μπορεί νάναι άξαφνα και κανένας μεγαλέμπορος [...] το ίδιο και πολλοί καθηγητάδες που δουλέβουνε ήσυχα στο γραφείο τους. Έτσι κ’ οι δημοσιογράφοι, που δε ζυγώνουνε στα πλούσια σπίτια, μ’ ένα λόγο, οι φωτισμένοι, διαβασμένοι,

<sup>23</sup>On Phanariot poetry see for example Frantzi 1993.

<sup>24</sup>Note also the comment: “Είχε δηλαδή το πολιτικό εκείνο και το μονάχα πολιτικό, που οι Πολίτες είτε από γεννησιμιό τους το βαστούνε, είτε από την πολύχρονη σκλαβιά το μάθανε, πάει να πη μέσα τους να τα φυλάγουνε όσα η καρδιά τους ξέρη [...]” (121).



προκομμένοι ποιητάδες, πεζογράφοι, μυθιστοριογράφοι  
και λοιποί [...] (295).

According to the views advanced in the novel, it was important for people to know themselves and what they wanted to achieve in their lives, and this could also be reflected in literature, since the poet presents aspects of the society to which he belongs.<sup>25</sup> If Athenian society was not as backward as that of Constantinople, which did not even have a proper poet among its population, it was nevertheless still very slow to make the transition from old beliefs to new ideas: “Οι Αθηναίοι, σε κείνα τα χρόνια, δεν το νοιώθανε ακόμη πως φιλολογία σ’ ένα έθνος σημαίνει, όχι να παπαγαλίζης, παρά να ψυχολογάς ίσια ίσια τα ντόπια, την εθνική ψυχή να μελετάς” (190). However, he clearly put all his hopes in the culture of the Ionian Islands.

The people in the Ionian Islands appeared to have followed successfully the process of adopting the Western mentality and culture in Greece at that time. Their inhabitants displayed different characteristics from the rest of the Greeks. It was significant that they had never endured the Turkish occupation, only a European one, which had not been as hard, and from which they had adopted certain positive habits, like making provision for the future. This attitude gave them a strong belief in their existence as a distinct community, in contrast to the mentality in mainland Greece and Constantinople, which made people inclined to a fatalistic attitude, living only for the present. Psycharis also included a story which vividly portrayed the character of the islanders, who guarded their money even at the risk of their lives (p.167-68 of the novel). He explicitly praised the people of the islands for their virtues and pointed out that their belief in the future encapsulated an important element of national awareness: “[...] κ’ ίσια ίσια έθνος αφτό θα πη, να πιστέβης πως έχεις μέλλο, δηλαδή πως θα

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<sup>25</sup>Poet meaning an intellectual. See also footnote 24, of Chapter Four.

ζήσετε χρόνια. πως αιώνες θα ζήσετε και το έθνος και συ και οι στερνοί σου” (166-7).

He also honoured, implicitly, the cultural tradition of the islands’ poetry by including references to it in his novel, as will be explained below.

After the loss of his manuscript in Athens, the narrator finds refuge on the island of Agia Mavra (Lefkada), in the village of Vafkeri and, inspired by the physical beauty of the surroundings, he wants to render it in poetry. It is in this place that he has, for the first time, the vision of the dead Myrtoula which will accompany him in his writings, and every time he wants to be reunited with his Muse, he will go back to the island.<sup>26</sup> The vision of Myrtoula, described as if dressed in moonlight, is a symbolic reference and a tribute to Solomos’s poetry, alluding to the appearance of the ‘Φεγγαροντυμένη’ in the poem “Κρητικός”. There are other references too which have a similar function. At the end of the story, when Astras dies in his attempt to meet his last love in the turbulent sea, there is a special glow to his face before death which brings to mind Solomos’s verse: “Άστραψε φως και γνώρισε ο νιος τον εαυτό του” (see Solomos 1961: 255). These are the words with which the poet describes the last moments of the swimmer in the poem “Porfyras” before he is attacked by a shark in the sea (for an analysis of Solomos’s poetry see Mackridge 1989). The description in the novel is almost identical to that image in the poem: “[π]ερεχύθηκε στο πρόσωπό του μια χαρά μυστική· δηγότανε ο καϊζής, πως ποτέ του τέτοιο πρόσωπο δεν είδε, ουρανόφεγγο, αθώο, το δεφτερόλεφτο που άστραψε και μπόρεσε να το διη. Τότες ίσια ίσια, πετάχτηκε, τον έφαγε το κύμα” (442).

There was, of course, another reason why the author honoured the Ionian cultural tradition: because of its adoption of the demotic language. Through the narrator’s comments, Psycharis points out that only in this place had he found people

<sup>26</sup>The village of Vafkeri was the birthplace of Psycharis’s beloved Olga Valaoritis, who like the dead Myrtoula in the novel, personified his Muse.

with a clear idea of their common characteristics and beliefs, as a distinct group. The awareness of these people was manifested in the language used in everyday life, as well as in literature, which made them come together as a community. Psycharis strongly believed that the people who used the demotic language used the language of freedom, and this had an impact on their general outlook on life (see also Psycharis 1902b: 168). Furthermore, he always spoke favourably of the poets of the Ionian Islands: Vilaras, Valaoritis, and especially Solomos whom he considered to be the only true Greek poet to emerge after the centuries of the Ottoman Occupation (see Chapters One and Six of the thesis).

Thus the narrator's itinerary through the Greek topography helped him to discover the different expressions of the 'Greek soul', and to put forward, in his narrative, the author's ideological positions regarding the Greek national revival. According to numerous comments in the text, the author emphasises the message that the Greek people should develop an awareness of their own identity; who they were, and what they aimed to achieve. They should also adopt the demotic language which was used in everyday life in the Ionian Islands. In essence, they should create their own distinct national and cultural community separate from external influences.

It is worth mentioning that in contrast to the spatial movement from one place to the other the time elapsing between these transitions appears to be condensed. The only incident which gives the impression of temporal movement is Myrtoula's death; otherwise, the awareness of both the male characters remains almost unaltered, despite the fact that these transitions should have taken place over several years. The specific spatial movement suggests the ideological transition from a less advanced to a more advanced Greek identity and culture, in accordance with the similar metaphorical transition in topography that is described in *To Tačίδι μου*.

## 5. The portrayal of women

In view of the way the novel focuses on Astras's love-life, and what love meant to different people, it is not surprising that it is inhabited by so many female characters. From the narrator's mother to their first childhood playmates, to wives, lovers. Muses, the narrative seems to include many different types of women. However, despite the many female presences, there is little authenticity in their voices.

First of all, Asteris presents his mother as a quiet and reserved woman, full of kindness for others, putting their needs before her own but always hiding her own feelings. The 'mother' figure represents one category of women in the novel, an example being kokona Elego. The second category of women consists of the ones who refer directly or implicitly to works of art. The narrative praises female beauty and the beauty that is apparent in an artistic creation. In this case, women are viewed as cultural abstractions, silent but rewarding for those who can appreciate their unique characteristics. Silvia, for example, the first love of the two brothers, is an opera singer, with the appearance of a goddess:

Η Σίλβια θεόμορφη. Μάτια βελουδένια που σπιθοβολούσανε κιόλας. Μια έκφραση μέσα τους ήσυχη, γλυκειά, σαν ερωτευμένη. Μύτη ψιλή, περήφανη, μεγάλη και ίσια. Χρυσόφεγγε στην κόμη της το χρώμα το βενετσιάνικο, το περίφημο, που τόκαμε ο Τιτζιάνος αθάνατο και που αθάνατο έκαμε τον Τιτζιάνο. Ανάστημα θεάς. Χυμένο κορμί, πιο λιγνούτσικο παρά παχουλό, μα με κάτι ολοστρόγγυλα όρθια στηθάκια, που η χαριτωμένη πυργωτή τους φόρμα έδινε στο βάδισμα της αέρα βασιλικό (11).

Silvia is presented like a precursor Muse, she is the first love, before the true love, the real Muse. The real Muse in this case is Myrtoula, the personification of the 'Idea', who sacrificed her life, metaphorically, in order to give all of her love to Astras. She also guides Asteris, giving him courage, and inspiration in his writings, showing him the true way: “Ρωμαίικο χόμα να γίνης, να γίνης δέντρο, να γίνης ελιά! Να θρέφης πλούσιους και φτωχούς, άντρες, γυναίκες και παιδάκια. Ο ελιώνας μου να σε φωτίση [...] να τραγουδάς την αγάπη, την ψυχή, τη ζωή μας και να είσαι πάντα μου, πάντα έλληνας της Ελλάδας μας, της Ρωμιοσύνης μας ποιητής” (306).

There is a third category of women portrayed in the novel, the ones who provoke lust in men, like Annoula, the childhood friend, the various lovers of their father, and more importantly, the faithful servant Frosoula. Frosoula learns about sexual love for the first time with Astras and becomes his loyal friend and constant lover, even in between his other love affairs. She even brings young girls to him, to gain his favour, and helps him to seduce them. This type of representation was very provocative for the period. It is only because women are not given any textual space as separate entities that this type of behaviour becomes comprehensible. Frosoula conceives of herself as part of Astras's life, and she finds happiness or misery whenever he feels those emotions. Her existence in life is justified because she makes him happy. In addition, as mentioned above, when Frosoula tries to tell her love story as a narrative, the narrator, according to his own admission, intervenes and changes her words and views. There are a few expressions in the novel which belong to her, as for example when she asks permission to kiss the narrator's feet after they get married. A contemporary reader, especially a female one, might find these scenes very disturbing, but I believe that they were extreme even for the period in which the novel was written (that is the reason Psycharis warned Mrs. Episkopopoulos in his

introduction that his novel was not for young girls). When Astras dies, Frosoula has to justify her existence by becoming the mother of the narrator's child. Thus when she ceases being a lover, she has to embrace the maternal role, otherwise there would be no place for her in the textual world.

Even though Psycharis had expressed his support for the feminist movement for emancipation (see Psycharis 1907b: 23/149 – one page with double numbering), there is no sign of it in this novel, unless he considered free sexual conduct a sign of emancipation. By contrast, the narrator views women as slaves, who have to sacrifice themselves for a man's tenderness, while men, on the other hand, can behave as they please: “Να ποιητής! Ποιητής από μένα πιο σωστός. Ναγαπάς και ναγαπιέσαι, τίποτα δεν είναι! Μα να μου βρης μια γυναίκα, που σε λατρεύει, να την κάμης δούλο σου και πράμα σου, να την αγαπάς όταν αδειάζεις, κι αφτή να σκοτώνεται για σένα [...]” (139-40). There is only one incident where a woman is allowed an equal role with men, and even that is so allegorical that it cannot be considered a representative example. This involves the story of the female newspaper editor, Aspasia, who was also the lover of many important people in Athens and thus able to manipulate various situations to her advantage. This case refers to the story of, Aspasia, wife of Pericles who ruled in Athens in ancient times: “[...] η Ασπασία μας, αν και πολλά δε θα γνώριζε από ταρχαία τα ιστορικά της Ελλάδας, καταστάλαξε στα γράμματα, όπως ταιριάζει σε μια χώρα όπου βασίλευσε, μια φορά κ' έναν καιρό, η πρώτη Ασπασία” (299).

The only thing in accordance with the ideas of the period discussed by other writers such as Palamas, Xenopoulos, Parren, that Psycharis kept in the narrative, was the new position of women as contributors to the national evolution, as the ones who would nurture the future generations of Greeks (see Anastasopoulou 1997). As is



stressed in the Introduction of the novel, the author hoped that women would promote national awareness and teach the language. It is the personification of the female as the Greek nation that saves the narrative's portrayal of women from being completely derogatory: “Ξέρεις τι θα πη μια Μυρτούλα; Ξέρεις μια Φροσούλα τι θα πη; Φαντάσου τι μπορείς να προσμένης από τη Ρωμοσύνη, όταν καλλιεργηθούνε, όταν ξαπλωθούνε, να λουλουδιάσουνε σε άλλο χρώμα, όλες οι θείες αρετές, οι θησαυροί όλοι που στολίζουνε μια Φροσούλα” (458-9). Psycharis's female characters in general portray the ideal of selflessness. According to the narrator in this novel, the most important virtue in life was love, and as the narrative showed, only women knew how to love properly: “Στην αγάπη φαίνεται η γυναίκα· ίσως φαίνεται στην αγάπη της γυναίκας κ' ένα έθνος αλάκαιρο” (429-30).

## 6. Sexual desire – narrative process

“Narratives both tell of desire – typically present some story of desire - and arouse and make use of desire as a dynamic of signification” (Brooks 1995: 37). This means that they rely on the readers' desire to understand the meaning of what is narrated. By the nineteenth century, the basic dynamic of plot in narratives became ambition, as the character's drive to possess and to progress, which included in it the sexual desire (ibid: 39). Ambition is what motivates the main character to his/her achievements and thus is what creates the sequence of events which form the plot. Ambition is communicated to the reader through a process of empathy with the character, and indicates his role which is “to construct meanings in larger contexts” (ibid), with the text that is in front of him/her as the starting point each time. The heart's desire of life has three levels in this narrative: sexual power, financial power, and narrative power. All three are presented positively in the narrative as

indispensable elements of the bourgeoisie. What is given negative value is lack of self-knowledge, the idea that financial, sexual or narrative power can turn one into something other than what one really is.

In particular, the strong sexual desires of Astras are compared several times with the narrator's need to tell the most beautiful story, and this urge is what drives the characters forward to their destiny. There are other degrees of sexual love described in the novel, but these do not have the narrator's approval: sexual games as a manifestation of idleness of the upper classes, the inappropriate desires of young children, and the behaviour of one character (Vladimiros) which is not described but is implied as something to be avoided. By contrast, what the narrator approves of is a type of desire that is experienced to the full, and may end up destroying the person who expends all his/her energy to feel it. This passionate love destroys Myrtoula, for example, and almost drives Frosoula crazy when she cannot get close to Astras: "[...] από τον πόθο της να την πάρη, να την απορρουφήξει αλάκαιρη, αλάκαιρη να του παραδοθή, έπαθε η καρδιά της, έσπασε ανέβρυσμα κ' έτσι αλήθεια του έδωσε την ψυχή της" (115). The limit of this desire is thus death but, as the narrative suggests with Myrtoula's and Astras's death, this ending is not necessarily something negative. The energy of love is not wasted because Myrtoula is transformed into a vision which supports the poet, and Astras's energy is transferred to his daughter Eleni, whom he creates with his last love before dying, and his life is turned into a narrative.<sup>27</sup> Thus what drives the narrative forward is deep love and strong ambition, without which life is never complete or justified.

The emblem of this desire becomes the story of Lope de Vega and his constant search for that particular book which he coveted as a child. Just as the narrator wants

<sup>27</sup>Eleni is united at the end with Konstantinos, the narrator's son by Frosoula, and this union of the two cousins signifies the bond between mind and soul, between the mentalities of Athens and Constantinople, in order to suggest finally, allegorically, that the unified Greek nation is a possibility.

to obtain knowledge, to be able to explain the world, and then to give this knowledge back through his books, the brother wants to possess all women's love and affections: "Τέτοιο πόθο, τέτοια λατρεία, το ξέρω, αχ! έχει κι ο ποιητής, σα γυρέβει να νοιώση ως την ουσία τους μέσα, ένα αίσθημα ή μια ιδέα" (164). Ambition, for the narrator, is indefinable and endless. It also creates a sense of fear and responsibility: "Πώς να σας το πω; Να, δεν τολμούσα να βαστάζω την πέννα, το χαρτί τόπαιρνα και τάφινά, το σκιαζόμουνε το χαρτί, μην τύχη και δε χαράξω απάνω του ό,τι έπρεπε, ό,τι ταίριαζε, ό,τι άξιζε μια ιδέα που εμένα μου φαινότανε μεγάλη, έτρεμα το χαρτί, μην τύχη και το λερώσω, μην τύχη και χαλάσω την ιδέα μου, τόση αγάπη, τόσο σέβας της είχα" (303-4). This hesitation when faced with a blank piece of paper, whilst in the process of writing, resembles the hesitation of the lover before the sexual act with the woman he loves and admires. What is implied is that the ambition of the writer, like sexual energy, should not be expended on causes or people unworthy of it, otherwise the 'meaning' becomes incoherent. Thus, not only is the plot created in accordance with the ambition of each character and synchronised to the master plan of the author, but also ambition is thematised in the discussion between the narrator and his readers.

The ultimate ambition is almost identical in both the lover and the poet. The narrator aims to grasp the idea that can be expressed as an eternal ideal, as an all-encompassing truth. The lover seeks always to understand all females through one woman.<sup>28</sup> Astras realises the impossibility of completely fulfilling his ambition at the end: "Κοίταξε. Κοίταξε, Φροσούλα μου. Πόσα κορίτσια που περνούνε στα μάτια μου μπροστά, πόσες γυναίκες, και πόσες άλλες υπάρχουνε στον κόσμο, που ποτέ μου όλες όλες δε θα τις προφτάσω, ποτέ μου όλες όλες δε θα τις χαρώ! " (457). For this reason,

<sup>28</sup> Although ambition in most nineteenth-century novels is mainly masculine, in this novel, ambition, as a sexual power at least, also takes on a feminine dimension: "ίσως έλιωνε και δάφτη από τον πόθο του κι από τον πόθο της τον ίδιο, ίσως γύρεβε να πεταχτή, να σμιζούνε από κοντά οι αναστεναγμοί της με τους αναστεναγμούς τους δικούς του" (385).

the narrative has to limit itself to one central story of desire, between Astras and Frosoula, and the narrator's telling of it, otherwise the narrative would be endless. The telling could go on interminably until, finally, the desire is subdued: “Κόντεψε να μην τελειώσει το βιβλίο μου, η μακρινή μου αφήγηση για τα ιστορικά του αδερφούλη και τα δικά μου” (456). Thus the constraints of physical life also form the limits of this narrative. There is a paradox in the fact that lack of ambition signifies absence of life and therefore silence and emptiness, but at the same time the consummation of ambition in narrative terms results both in the ending of life and of the narrative.

In an allegory which connects sexual desire with the narrative process, the woman represents the novel, the creation of the poet who is also the lover: “Να, τι να σε πω, τσελεμπή μου; Τέτοια η μοίρα μου εμένα. Είμαι πέταλο φτιασμένο, πέταλο που Εκείνος τόφτιαξε κατά τη θέλησή του. Όπου πάγαινε, πάγαινα και γω. Είμαι όλη μου φτιαγμένη. Όπως μ' έκαμε ο αφέντης, έτσι έζησα και ζω” (438). Frosoula is the creation of Astras to the same extent that their love story is created by Asteris. Just as Frosoula gains her identity gradually through her adventures with Astras, so the narrative progresses by deploying these adventures, until Frosoula produces the ‘star of beauty’, her son, and the narrator completes his story, his progeny, in the chapter ‘The Star of Beauty’. Psycharis, unlike Lope de Vega, concludes the story with a rather strong affirmation, by implying that he had found the ultimate ideal.

## Conclusion

*Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, reads like a traveller's memoir and impressions from visiting various places, not only in Greece but also in Europe. Perhaps the successful form of *Το Ταξίδι μου* (1888) permeated everything else that the author produced thereafter. It also functions in terms of Lukács's definition of the novel, as a “story of the soul that

goes to find itself, that seeks adventures in order to be proved and tested by them, and by proving itself, to find its own essence” (Lukács 1971: 89). The two brothers and their adventures are the models for this quest of identity, personal and national.

In this novel, too, Psycharis connects the national identity with the cultural one. He shows that the one cannot evolve without the other, and that the poet’s true mission is to guide people to discover their true identity, like the magician in the story *O Μάγος*. He also describes the quest for ideal love as inseparable from a literary creation suitable to the needs of the Greek nation, and prescribes a specific role for women. He believed that women were able to give happiness and contentment to men but also, more importantly, educate the new generations by the way they used language and through their understanding of literature. The vision of Myrtoula in the novel becomes the Muse of the narrator, urging him to be the poet of Greeks: “[N]α τραγουδάς την αγάπη, την ψυχή, τη ζωή μας και να είσαι πάντα μου, πάντα, έλληνας της Ελλάδας μας, της Ρωμιοσύνης μας ποιητής” (306).

In order to specify what he considered the true Greek identity, he analysed the mentality of people in different parts of Greece and in Constantinople and compared them with other people in Europe. He pointed out in the novel that all the nations in Europe had progressed because they were aware of their history, and even the poorest people there possessed a national pride which their poets had inspired in them. Greek people should also develop a clear idea of their national identity, and should find strength in the literary output of their writers, avoiding imitation of foreign ideas and trends.

The symbol of the mirror, used extensively in the novel, suggests the necessity for honesty in one’s private life, in accepting who one is, in the social life of the community, and in the organisation of the nation. According to the self-referential

elements in the novel, the poet's role was also a vital element for accomplishing the above task: "[π]ρέπει να τις γίνουνε τα βιβλία μας καθρέφτης, να καμαρώνουνε μέσα την ομορφιά τους, κ' έτσι να καταντήσουνε τα ρομάντζα μας σαν ποίημα ομηρικό, που το ζωντανό μας το έθνος ναντικρύζει μέσα τον εαυτό του, ναντικρύζει τα καλά και τα κακά του, να νοιώθει την ψυχή του, ποια είναι." (201).



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### *ΑΓΝΗ* (1913): THE TEMPTATIONS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

*Il n'est point défendu, il est même prescrit à l'écrivain de tirer de la vie les éléments de son œuvre* (Psichari 1913: 20).

*Αγνή*, published in 1913, is the last novel written by Psycharis in Greek – with the exception of the unpublished *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914). Yet in terms of plot and characters, it hardly feels like an original creation. Many of its scenes read like repetitions of those in his two previous novels, *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1911) and *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα* (1907) or even the first novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897). As opposed to his earlier novels, in particular *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά* (1904), where the author takes an individual character or a specific case as a starting point in order to make general statements about human nature, this one remains, highly individualistic. The truths which are presented primarily involve the author himself and his life, and secondly the role of the artist in society. The novel is written in the third person but the focus is so clearly placed on the main character that it seems as if it is written in the first person, reinforcing the impression that it is autobiographical.

In the novel's dedication to his friend Marinos Sigouros, a Zakynthian poet and translator, cousin to the mother of N. Episkopopoulos, Psycharis pointed out that he wanted to write a short novel with only one or two main characters and one or two major events. He felt that he had taken too much time and effort describing many different characters in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* and wished, somehow, to achieve the opposite effect: a more personal novel. However, by his own admission, the plan presented

more difficulties than he had anticipated (Psycharis 1912-3: 1).<sup>1</sup> As I will point out below, part of the problem was the difficulty of disguising events from his own life and his personal feelings in order to make the novel interesting for other people. This challenge becomes apparent from the beginning, as the girl of the title, Αγνή, is given a subordinate role to the main character in the novel, Andreas, who is a projection of the real-life author. As Glinos has pointed out in his introduction to the 1930 edition, “όταν διαβάσει κανείς και αποτελειώσει το έργο, η Αγνή έχει μείνει στη σκιά. Εκείνος που ανορθώνεται στην ψυχή μας και αφήνει τον αντίλαλό του είναι ο Αντρέας, δηλαδή ο ίδιος ο Ψυχάρης. Γιατί στ’ αλήθεια αυτόν μας αναλύει και αυτουνού είναι αλάκαιρη η περιπέτεια, που περιγράφεται στο μυθιστόρημα” (1930: 16).

This chapter will analyse firstly, the ideas of the novel and its narrative techniques. These two elements indicate whether or not the author follows a pattern similar to that detected in his other novels. Secondly, the chapter aims to analyse the extent to which the autobiographical element can contribute to the didactic objectives of Psycharis’s novel. This means assessing how successful the projection of the writer and character as a role model was. The autobiographical element brings to the fore the fundamental question of ‘what is literature?’ and, more generally, ‘what is involved in an artistic creation?’. By attempting to define these areas, Psycharis explores his own identity and, at the same time, poses questions regarding Greek culture. Thirdly, this

<sup>1</sup>Henceforth, all references to the novel will be from the first edition, and the page numbers will be given in parenthesis in the main text. The differences between the first edition of the novel in 1912-3, in Estia, and the second one, in 1930 by Eleftheroudakis, with an introduction by Glinos are not remarkable. The second edition does not have the table of contents, the titles of some of the chapters are in capital letters whereas in the original they are in italics (see: ...*don d' une main mourante*...), and some of the words are more standardised, possibly by the publisher: for example, *αλαφρό* (1912-3: 124) becomes *ελαφρό* in (1930a: 181), *νοικοκεριό* in (1912-3: 144), becomes *νοικοκυριό* in (1930a: 204). There were, however, different reprintings of the second edition, by other publishers, not very faithful to the original, omitting in particular most of the musical notes or being very liberal with the use of the musical notes in different sections of the narrative (e.g. the edition Pella dated 1976 and Vivlioekdotiki, dated 1955).

chapter will discuss the role of music in literary writing, and why the connection between music, literature, and other arts, seems salient among the objectives of the novel. A fourth point, which has been raised in the sixth chapter, will be explored further. This refers to the conditions necessary to writing literature: the status of the artist and the love of women. These two are typical conditions that seem to appear either as positive or negative forces in most of Psycharis's novels. This final point is closely related, once again, to the autobiographical element, which is a prominent feature of the novel, binding together all the other elements, and suggesting that identity is created by and through the act of writing.

The novel is divided into ten chapters collected in five main parts and the plot is very simple. The main character, Andreas, is a writer who has exiled himself in Lausanne in order to recover from an unfortunate sexual liaison. He is already fifty-eight years old and suffering from life's misfortunes. In the beginning of the novel, he is thinking about his life and, in particular, about the two women who have had most impact on it. There is, however, an impersonal narrator telling Andreas's story and analysing his feelings and thoughts, as if he knows more about the character's thoughts and feelings than the character himself. The impersonal narrator also presents to readers the two women in Andreas's life, both dressmakers, but with different reputations: the one is always called by various derogatory epithets, and never by name, while the other one is referred to as pure and innocent. The latter, Flora, had lost Andreas's love through her failure to believe in the truth of his intentions, whereas the other woman who is not named, had never been the faithful type. While Andreas contemplates these past loves of his life, he meets Agni, a young dressmaker, who comes to clean his room to help her aunt, and he starts thinking about her. Gradually he falls in love with her and, eventually, the two marry despite

Andreas's health problems. Their happiness will be short-lived though, as Andreas will die of a heart attack, leaving the pregnant Agni alone.

The titles of the first and last chapter are words from an unidentified Italian opera: "Ora son io, io ch   (sic) t' imploro" and correspond to the past and the future respectively. The second chapter, "Η Αγνή", and the fifth, "Στο Λιμάνι", refer to the present of the narrative, while the third, "Don d'une main mourante", goes briefly back to the past. The rest of the chapters have musical notes for titles, with the accompanying words in German and in Greek, suggesting the feelings of characters. The first part of the novel explores Andreas's past, the second part presents the meeting of the two main characters, Andreas and Agni, and the third, Andreas's lust for Agni. The fourth part presents the various trials in these two people's love, the evil other woman who wants to destroy them, the misunderstandings and also Andreas's failing health. The fifth part gives the denouement of the story. Overall the divisions and the episodes described give the impression of reading the story of an opera (see Robinson 1988: 57-8). However, at the end, there is some hope, perhaps not in the way that readers would have expected but in a metaphysical sense. Andreas passes away but Agni, who can be seen as a metaphor for his work, lives and carries with her the seeds for the future.

### **1. The main themes and ideas of the novel**

In the first chapter of the novel, Andreas imagines communicating with the woman he had wanted to keep in his life through the words of an unidentified Italian opera, which are then used by her to implore her lover not to leave her.<sup>2</sup> This opera, and in particular the part that continually comes into the character's head, "Ora son io,

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<sup>2</sup>The circulation of a thought among different characters reminds us of a similar technique in *To Ta  idi mou*.

io ch  (sic) t' imploro", is used to suggest that a musical piece can function as a suitable mode of communication between lovers facing adverse circumstances and it can reveal more about their feelings than plain dialogue. Initially, Andreas seems to be obsessed with this music as he examines his past and realises that he carries with him the burden of irreparable errors. According to the narrator, the character was reviewing his life and wanted to change its course and start again: "γ ρεβε τ ρα κ τι που το γυρέβουμε συχν , μα που το κατορθ νουμε σπάνια, να ξεκ μουμε  ,τι κ μαμε, να διορθ σουμε ταδι ρθωτα , σβησι  να ξολοθρέψουμε τις αμαρτίες μας, να ξαναρχίσουμε, να ξαναπι σουμε τη ζω  μας στο σημ ιο που παραστράτησε, να π ρουμε πια το δ ρομο το σωστό" (14).

This explanation sets the partly autobiographical tone of the writing. The main focus of the novel is the presentation of Andreas's feelings and life. This presentation appears in certain parts almost identical with Psycharis's attempt at autobiography in "Τα γενεαλογικά μου" (Zolotas 1928). Andreas's life is the same as the author's: growing up motherless and cared for by his grandmother; his father's behaviour, his own studies and dreams, and other details from his life. Explaining these dreams, the narrator states that Andreas wanted to do something for Greece but could not expose his work to the Greek public. Therefore, he decided to leave Paris, where he had grown up, for Lausanne, in the hope of finding peace and artistic inspiration, having never abandoned his ambition of offering something to his country. The first chapter ends with music, depicting Andreas's thoughts and imploring the mountains of Lausanne to heal his wounds.

One important theme in the novel is the significance of music and of other art forms. Music helps the character to build a connection with his inner self and simultaneously to find peace and inspiration. This is the case in the second chapter of

the novel, where another musical motif, the music from ‘Les Huguenots’ of Mayerbeer, introduces the idea of the Muse, who comes to help the poet in his endeavours. When Andreas meets Agni for the first time, all the neighbouring church bells start ringing at the same time, creating a very special sound which gives a serene and welcoming feeling: “[ε]ίτανε γιορτή και το κατάλαβε ο Αντρέας από τις καμπάνες. Τόσο τονέ συνέπαιρνε το ουράνιο το τραγούδι, που μόλις άκουσε στην πόρτα του σπουδαστηριού έναν κρότο ψιλό ψιλό, σα να ζητούσε να κανείς να μπη μέσα” (35).

In the third part of the novel, the author explores the elements that contribute to artistic inspiration. This leads him back to the starting point, thus suggesting an endless cycle of creativity, in which one artistic element provides the spark which initiates another art form and so forth. The third part of the narrative starts with a phrase from Lamartine’s poem “Le Crucifix”: “...don d’une main mourante”.<sup>3</sup> Andreas uses the power of the foreign phrase to create his own perfect poetry: “[...] ο στίχος σα να του έδινε κάποια δύναμη συνάμα, σα να ξυπνούσε ο ξένος ο ποιητής τον ποιητή που είχε μέσα του, και που κοιμότανε από την κούραση, από τη δυστυχία” (48). He starts giving shape to his imagination with the aid of music, the poem, his own misfortunes with Flora and the ring that she had given back to him when she was dying, urging him to find another woman worthy of his love. All of these elements are intermingled and combine to inspire the writing of a drama, which describes his relationship with Flora. He starts writing the first act of his drama but also remains preoccupied with the present. The narrative integrates the beginning of Andreas’s drama with the story of the novel, and by these means, the author introduces a variation of the technique of *mise en abyme*. Andreas writes his own story as a drama,

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<sup>3</sup>See Lamartine 1968: 220-23 for the whole of the poem. It must be mentioned that this poem was set to music by Victor Massé; this is yet another musical reference in the novel.



keeping the name of his beloved Flora but changing his own to Kostas: “ [...] πώς να τον πούμε; του Αντρέα...οχιδά, του Κώστα...” (57). Thus Psycharis writes a novel, which contains autobiographical elements, in which the main character is another writer, who writes about his life, and the story continues *ad infinitum*. Furthermore, the main character in the drama, Kostas, is called Andreas in another part of the novel: “—Έτσι, περίφημα! Κι αφτός να μείνη Αντρέας!’...” (74). It is as if the fictional characters Andreas and Kostas are one and the same person and therefore, by association, Andreas is also a personification of the real-life author. This identification not only reinforces the autobiographical element of the novel but also places a strong emphasis on the activity of creative writing since the latter seems to be the main occupation of all these fictional characters. The drama within the novel is entitled “The Ring”; even though the title is not the same as that of the novel, the ring has various references in the novel which justify the connection of the two (drama and novel) in a *mise en abyme* scheme.

The ring not only refers to the adventures of the gift Andreas had given to Flora but also to the famous cycle of operas by Wagner, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, often referred to simply as ‘The Ring’. “The ring gives mastery of the world but at the cost of renunciation of love” (Westrup & Harrison 1988: 404). Furthermore, the title of the third part of the novel: “...don d’une main mourante” is also a symbolic reference to Andreas’s beloved Flora, who had died in his arms returning his ring to him. It is associated also with the title of the penultimate part of the novel: “Que cet anneau lui rappelle sans cesse” (179), a line in French translation from another Wagnerian opera, *Lohengrin*. Thus the ring functions as a *leitmotif* with specific connotations, illustrating the idea of lost love, in accordance with this technique that featured in Wagner’s operas. Wagner used a recurring musical theme to illustrate

better a character or idea in his operas. Similarly the narrative creates a complex symbolic context, in which the ring is a very special symbol, the strength of which evokes also the idea of creativity and comfort, reinforcing the autobiographical element.<sup>4</sup>

The various intertextual references put forward also the importance of the role of the artist and his moral duty to the public, which is considered sacred. The main character's work becomes the absolute ideal to which he must dedicate all his efforts, like a personal religion that is above all other obligations. By referring to Lamartine, a very religious poet of the romantic era, Psycharis wishes to denote his personal sacred sphere and his own definition of religion. He suggests that Lamartine did not believe so much in spiritual love, but in a more tangible form of physical love, since he had replaced God with a specific person, his beloved. He bases this belief on the words of Lamartine's poem referred to in the novel: "Symbole deux fois saint, don d'une main mourante, /Image de mon Dieu!" (46). These verses tie up with the song that Andreas sings in the same part of the narrative based on a line from Mayerbeer: "comptez sur mon courage; entre vos mains j'engage mes sermens (sic) et ma foi!" (25), another musical reference.

As regards the autobiographical element in the novel, it is known that in real life Psycharis had an illicit affair with Olga Valaoritis. In a moment of sentimental tension, after an argument and reconciliation, she had given him her bracelet to keep as a token of her love. It is reasonable to assume that in the novel, this becomes a ring.

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<sup>4</sup>The 'ring' seems to be a frequent theme in the literature and music of the period. Psycharis must have known the play (*ονειρόδραμα*) of the same title by Kambysis (1898) which was inspired by the life and death of Kostas Krystallis. There is also Manolis Kalomoiris's opera with the title *Το Δαχτυλίδι της Μάνας*, which was however written a few years later. Kalomoiris was a fervent supporter of the demoticist movement and had strong ties with all the demoticist writers, however, it cannot be argued with certainty whether his opera had anything to do with their novels (see Kalomoiris 1988, in particular pages 87, 118-9). For the symbol of the ring, see also Psycharis's short story *Το Δαχτυλίδι του Γύη*, three parts, published in *Noumas* 1911, nos. 439: 357-62, 440: 369-78, 441: 385-91, and in Psycharis's *Στον Ισκιο του Πλατάνου* (1911: 212-83).

Psycharis mentions these details in his letters to Eftaliotis, where he points out that he kept the bracelet as something sacred, especially after her suicide.<sup>5</sup> It is plausible to suggest that 'Flora' in this novel could be a reference to Olga Valaoritis. Therefore, these references to the ring and the gift in the novel function as a type of catharsis.<sup>6</sup> Psycharis is very explicit in one of these letters regarding his connection with Olga:

Με το βραχιόλι σου κοιμήθηκα όλη τη νύχτα. Στο χέρι μου το βαστούσα και σαν ξύπνησα, το φίλησα δυνατά. Το φιλούσα και πάλε το φιλούσα, να το νοιώθω πως είναι δικό μου πάντα. Θυμάσαι; Μου τόδωσες μια βραδειά που μαλλώσαμε. Γιατί μαλλώναμε κιόλας και μάλιστα δεν ήθελες εκείνο το βράδυ να μου μιλήσης. Πήγαινα να φύγω. Σε κοίταζαν τα μάτια μου, παραπονεμένα, απελπισμένα, σε παρακαλούσανε με τα δάκρια, ένα λόγο να μου πης. Το λόγο, να μου τον πης, δεν πρόφταζες. Είτανε κόσμος. Μάνι μάνι, τη στιγμή που σ' αποχαιρετούσα, πήρες το βραχιόλι σου το μαλαματένιο, πρόβαλες όξω από την πόρτα, στο σκοτάδι, και μου τόδωσες. Το βραχιόλι σου, όποιος μου το πάρη ποτέ, θα μου πάρη και τη ζωή μου. Στον τάφο μου θέλω να τόχω μαζί μου. Σαν τάγγιζα τότες, θάρρεψα πως άγγιζα την αγάπη σου την ίδια. Κ' έτσι, τη νύχτα που μ' άφησες και πέθανες, ήθελα να το βαστώ, ώσπου να φέξη η μέρα, πάντα για να σε νοιώθω (Karatzas 1988: 150-1).

It must be added that the same symbol also appears in the novel *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), where it is depicted exactly as it is described in the above passage from the author's correspondence (1907a, 238: 2).

Psycharis emphasised also in this novel the importance of hard work through the creation of another character, the internal other, like the two brothers in the

<sup>5</sup>Psycharis's numerous letters to Eftaliotis indicate among other things an intention to read his work autobiographically.

<sup>6</sup>This is also the tenor of the writer's collection of poems entitled: *Le Crime du poète* (1913). In particular, the poem "Crime et devoir" is very explicit, because it expresses the author's dilemma between his duty to his wife and the love for the young girl: "Le crime: avoir aimer la vierge inaccessible/et de l'or de son coeur avoir conquis le *don* (my emphasis)/Le devoir: risquer tout, excepté l'impossible/l'abandon" (66). The use of the same word could be coincidental but it could equally be intentional. 'Le don', in Psycharis's thinking, is the gift of artistic creation, which the inaccessible virgin has inspired in the poet through her belief in him. The same context and similar feelings inspired by Flora apply equally to the story described in the novel.

previous novel, whose main function is to reinforce a belief in hard work as a moral duty. Andreas's friend, Kamekos, is a renowned violinist, who is praised for his talent, his orderly life, and his dedication to his profession: “– Ναι, βέβαια του αποκρίθηκε ο Καμέκος, καλά, ναι, αρκετά καλά έπαιξα, έτσι δεν είναι; Και τι καλά νάρχουνται νέοι, νάρχουνται παιδιά, να μ' ακούνε, για να μάθουνε τι θα πη χρέος” (59, my emphasis).<sup>7</sup> It is not without significance, that some of the details of Kamekos's life again refer to Psycharis's own life. For example, Kamekos is presented as a family man, who had four wonderful children, two boys and two girls; he had a weakness for smoking and was a keen walker (59). Thus the author 'divided' himself, again, into two different characters: 'Kamekos' and 'Andreas'. Though they were both artists, the one was more of a family man while the other was more of an adventurer and a lover.<sup>8</sup> The tendency to divide the protagonist into two main characters with complementary characteristics could be explained in psychological terms as an indication of being unhappy with himself and not fully approving of himself. Therefore, the main character who is always a projection of Psycharis, almost needs another 'self', another character, to balance the excesses of the first or simply to offer another perspective on his way of life. In fact, to the extent that the author is divided into two characters, the main character is also presented as a devoted artist and lover; the readers do not experience a multi-dimensional character. It is of course clear that the author tries to make his presence obvious in every possible way and finds a way to express his views on art and duty.

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<sup>7</sup> Elsewhere, at the end of the narrative, he is referred to as 'Kapekos'. This character reminds readers of another similar character in the novel *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*. In that case, as the emphasis of that novel was placed on scientific investigation, the character was a doctor named Palmis. His main function in the novel was to discuss the importance of his work, with Yanniris, the protagonist, and to suggest that one should work incessantly in order to be able to fulfil the aims one had set.

<sup>8</sup> In the previous novel, *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*, this distinction was even more clear-cut, as the two main characters, the twins, Asteris and Astras – who had taken aspects of Psycharis's own personality – were defined as the writer and the lover respectively.

In the penultimate chapter of the novel which starts and ends again with musical phrases in Greek, Andreas inserts himself into the story of *Lohengrin*, and identifies with the poet in the story.<sup>9</sup> The story of the opera is about disillusionment, exile, and death symbolised by the swan, and all of these emotions are generated in Andreas's heart because of the various turbulent episodes in his life. In the last chapter, however, Andreas recovers with the aid of his more logical friend, the 'Apollonian' Kamekos, and decides to marry Agni. His newly found happiness and security is sealed with a creative outpouring as Andreas writes poetry to his beloved – included in the narrative – and they lead an existence full of cultural events, such as going to the theatre, visiting churches and reading books of history.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The benefits for the writer of exploring autobiographical writing

As has been mentioned above, this novel includes elements from Psycharis's own life and the characters are portraits of his own family and social circle. For example, the author uses his own personality traits and details from his father's life in order to create Andreas. His life experience and other personal qualities and beliefs also serve to create Kamekos, the violinist. Similarly, Agni could be based on his second wife, Irène Baume, who is also symbolically represented as the serenity and the calmness in the poet's life with all the remarks about, "το γραφείο της Ειρήνης" (44, 89), "πεδιάδες Ειρηνεμένες" (141) and "το λιμάνι της Ειρήνης και της Αγάπης"

<sup>9</sup>Psycharis's preoccupation with the inclusion of music in a literary text had started from the writing of the novel *Η Αρρωστη Δούλα*, where he transcribed some notes of music in the text. In *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* there is a reference to music and to *Lohengrin*: "Στου Μπελλίνη τη γλυκειά την καρδιά κάποτε τραγουδούσανε μελωδίες αγνές, αιθερόπλαστες μελωδίες, που μοιάζει σα να προμάντεψε ο Μπελλίνης την αγγελική του Λοεγκρίν την αρμονία" (Psycharis 1910-1: 319). In *Αγνή*, there is a combination of both the above, musical references and inclusion of musical phrases typographically in the text, as well as the lines from these operas as *leitmotifs*.

<sup>10</sup>In a playful tone the narrator addresses the readers and explains why he has included one of Andreas's poems in the narrative: "[γ]ια να μην του χαλάσουμε το κέφι, παραθέτουμε δω πεντέξη στροφές, τις σημαντικότερες εκείνες δηλαδή που δείχνουνε καλήτερα το νόημα του συνόλου [...]" (202).

(29).<sup>11</sup> Flora, the unfortunate lover of Andreas, is probably based on Olga Valaoritis, as mentioned already. The novel is about Andreas, how he perceives himself, his physical appearance, his age, how he grew up, his social status and the turning points in his life, which are related to women and literary writing. The way Andreas thinks about his upbringing is very significant for the construction of self. Thus it is plausible to characterise the novel as partly autobiographical: Andreas-Psycharis views himself as a combination of different egos that correspond to the different women he had loved: “Έτσι ο Αντρέας, ενώ το ένα του το εγώ, αφού για τα εγώ του ο λόγος, χαιρότανε κι αναγάλλιαζε που παρουσιαζότανε κάποια εφκαιρία νανταμωθή γλήγορα με την Αγνούλα, ενώ το δεύτερο εγώ έκλαιγε δάκρια πικρόγλυκα στη θύμηση της Φλώρας, το τρίτο εγώ έβρισκε τρόπο, που είναι και το πιο απίστεπτο, να συνενώσει σε μια σκέψη τα δάκρια της Φλώρας με τη χαρά της Αγνής [...]” (75).

An interesting turn in the (auto)biographical writing is the way the author uses elements of the life of his own father in order to create the main character and justify his actions and choices in life. The readers notice, for example, how Andreas criticises his own father for not getting married again after his mother died, as was the case with Psycharis’s own father, but Andreas himself behaves in the same way, avoiding marriage.<sup>12</sup> With regard to the plot, there seems to be no reason why Andreas could not marry his beloved Flora, especially when she becomes pregnant, apart from a vague mention of her not belonging to the same social class. However, Andreas’s hesitation can be explained by extra-textual factors, taking into consideration the marital status of the real-life author. Since Psycharis is writing about his own life, he did not alter the fact that he was unable to marry his ‘Flora’ even though he could not

<sup>11</sup>At the end of the novel too there is a note, “ορθογραφική σημειωσούλα”, where the author implies that this work was inspired by his love for his second wife.

<sup>12</sup>Psycharis presents his father in *Οι Ψυχάρηδες: Τα γενεαλογικά μου* (Zolotas 1928: 826-36). The same type of father is also portrayed in *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (see Chapter Seven).



find a very plausible explanation for this in the narrative: “Γιατί όχι εφ’τάς; Δεν ήξερε” (9). Unfortunately their doomed relationship must have contributed to the girl’s suicide. Similarly in the novel, the innocent Flora almost fades away after her relationship with Andreas is broken off. A sense of guilt caused by his lover’s suicide must have followed Psycharis all his life.<sup>13</sup> Another turning point in the real author’s life, which caused him too a lot of grief and guilt, was the fact that he had to leave his first wife Noémi in order to marry the much younger Irène. His collection of poems “Le Crime du poète” (1913), a public explanation to his first wife, is significantly dedicated to the two important women in his life, his two wives. As in that case, the fictional recreation of certain episodes of his life resembles a confession of all the problems that troubled the real-life author (see also footnote 6 of this chapter). A very strong sense of accountability is apparent, particularly since the author viewed himself as a leader for other people. Thus by reliving some of these episodes, changing the details and indirectly requesting the understanding of the readers, who are his critics, Psycharis aims to bring his life’s work to its next phase.

It is commonly believed that, since each human life can be expressed as a narrative (life-story), the mediation of reading may help ‘put together’ a specific story. As Paul Ricoeur has pointed out, to bridge the gap from narrative to life and back, one needs the reader of his/her story: “[...] the process of composition, of configuration, is not completed in the text but in the reader and, under this condition, makes possible the reconfiguration of life by narrative [...] The sense or the significance of a narrative stems from the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the reader. The act of reading [...] becomes the critical moment of the entire

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<sup>13</sup>As is pointed out by Thrylos: “Η Όλγα Βαλαωρίτη [...], νέα κοπέλα [...] είχε αυτοκτονήσει γιατί την εγκατέλειψε και [...] την παρουσιάζει σχεδόν σε όλα του τα μυθιστορήματα με το όνομα Μυρριάνα, Μυρριέλα, Μοίριτα, Μοίρω, κι άλλες παραλλαγές, μεταμορφωμένη σε παρηγορήτρια, οδηγήτρια και εμπνεύστρια Μούσα του” (1963: 249).

analysis” (1991: 26). Implicitly, in order to give true meaning to the life-story presented, the role of the reader is just as important as that of the narrator and of the protagonist. Psycharis also identifies with the reader, in order to understand the role better himself, he ‘reads’ his own story as he writes it.<sup>14</sup>

The whole novel appears as a static vision, a picture of an episode in the life of the main character, which is intended to represent or account synecdochically for all of his life. His aspirations, his ideas and cultural stimuli are there for readers to understand, but no synthesis is attempted. The author stresses: “υπάρχει μόνο το μάτι που κοιτάζει τη δημιουργία και τη Λίμνη”, implying that he wants each of his readers to create their own synthesis and ultimately confirming that he needs others to give shape and value to his work, in other words to appreciate it. In that sense, Andreas or Kostas, and by association, Psycharis places himself in the position of the statue in the novel, the Swiss general who claimed that his work was a long-term effort, and he invites his readers to take on his own role, which was to pass by every day and look at the statue. It is a case of changing places, as he would have wanted readers to ‘see’ him and to ‘read’ his work. He gives readers his own task and his own power, and encourages them to write on his behalf, the Greek novel that he had been trying to create throughout his life. The advantage of giving readers their own power and task, and making them his collaborators in the writing of this novel, is that it gets them on his side and espousing his views. One could, therefore, argue that the fate of this novel lies in the hands of its readers, despite the reinforced presence of the author. The latter becomes apparent in the self-mocking remarks introduced through music again, with the German song ‘Du bist die Ruh, der Friede mild’, which had appeared

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<sup>14</sup>See Baudelaire’s comments with regard to Wagner’s music, referring to the act of listening (or reading or viewing) as a parallel to the act of writing (creation itself) (Sieburth 1994: 791).

also in *Ta Duo Adérophia* (translated into Greek), an “endless novel by a Greek writer” (69) – as the narrator described it.<sup>15</sup>

However, “autobiography is not *only* about the past, but is busily about the present as well”, as Jerome Bruner argues. “If it is to bring the protagonist up to the present, it must deal with the present as well as the past [...] but also, it must answer the question ‘why is it worth telling about it?’” (Bruner 2001: 29, the emphasis as it is in the text). This is a very important question to consider in relation to this novel. Apart from the obvious psychological catharsis for the author, which helps him get on with his life, there is a set of ideas presented to readers as suitable models of conduct. Thus it is exactly this point that “makes the telling ‘justifiable’ [...] a form of taking a stand” (ibid: 35). Even though the narrative is an evaluation of certain episodes and attitudes in the life of the main character, the assessment leads not only to a reconsideration of certain issues but also to consolidating some of his beliefs. These are the need for artistic inspiration, the idea of work as religion and as a moral commitment, and the desire to achieve something significant for one’s country. Through the story of Andreas, which alludes to Psycharis’s own story or, at least, to his aspirations, the author aims to make his views more attractive, thanks to the warmth of the personal confession and the simple conversation style (see Stergiopoulos 1986).

Regarding artistic inspiration, Psycharis believed in transforming everyday themes into suitable material for literature. He did not disregard the simple things in life, like the language of ordinary people and their popular sayings (as can also be seen in the novels *To Taxídi mou* and *Tóveipo tou Gianníρη*). He believed, though, that with the aid of imagination, the poet is able to transform everything into an artistic

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<sup>15</sup>The above reference aims to reinforce the presence of the real-life author and of his work, as pointed out by Robinson (1988: 59), and it also shows indirectly the continuity from one novel to the other (from *Ta Duo Adérophia* to *Aγνή*).

creation. In that respect, art is viewed not as something unattainable but as something taken from real life. Therefore, as is explained in this novel, even a modest popular musical motif can provide the inspiration for a complete work of literature: “υπάρχουνε κοινά μυαλά, τα μυαλά, φίλε μου, που άξια δεν είναι, γιατί δεν είναι και πρωτότυπα, να καταλάβουνε την πρωτοτυπία που μέσα του έχει κάθε πράμα, ως και το κοινό ακόμη, κ’ έτσι να το πάρουνε με νου καινούργιο, να το μεταχειριστούνε με τρόπο αμεταχείριστο” (27).

Another important point is the author’s belief in showing commitment and passion in whatever route one has chosen to follow. In this novel, the commitment to a set of beliefs and values becomes apparent through the two facets of the author: the characters Andreas and Kamekos. Through Andreas’s aims, the narrative promotes the idea that one should work according to one’s convictions in order to fulfil one’s dreams, and this dedication should be akin to a religion in life: “[...] [σ]τα συντρίμια [...] της πίστης, ανύψωσε το ναό της Ιδέας ή πιο ταπεινά, της δουλειάς της ήσυχης που για να γίνη, ανάγκη δεν έχει καμμιάν ανταμοιβή, μήτε ουράνια μήτε γήινη. Θρησκεία του το έργο του. Κι ακατάπαφτα εργαζότανε ο Αντρέας” (47). In the case of Kamekos, hard work is related more specifically to art and to a moral obligation towards the world: “[τ]ην τέχνη του αφτός δεν σου την είχε για καμιά ουρανοκατέβατη αλαμπουρνεζιά, για κάποιαν ακράτητη έμπνευση· σου την περνούσε κι ο ίδιος την περνούσε για *χρέος*, για χρέος ηθικό. Βέβαια! Αρμονία η μουσική. Το χρέος, αρμονία του κόσμου” (58, the emphasis as it is in the text).

Characteristically, the narrator inserts various prophetic comments, which connect the work and the aspirations of the main character with the intentions and hopes of the real-life author: “[λ]ογάριαζε βέβαια πως θα φέξη πια η μέρα η μεγάλη που η πατρίδα θα ρίξη μια ματιά στον πόνο και στα πονήματα μιας ζωής αλάκαιρης”

(215). At that point in his life the author must have been considering how much he had achieved, and what more needed to be done in order to promote the ‘Idea’ of linguistic and cultural reform in Greece. Around 1913, the author was leaving his first wife for a younger one and he also adopted a more compromising and less rigid attitude with regard to promoting the demotic. The partly autobiographical narrative helps him cultivate his personal myth and posthumous fame by trying to rectify his mistakes and by making his present more attractive. It is also important to point out that the interpretation of the main character’s life goes beyond the past and present events and extends into the future as the narrator remarks with irony and self-mockery that, “απαρατήρητα περάσανε στην Ελλάδα ταριστουργήματα του Αντρέα, ως κι ο θάνατος του” (215). It is certain that the author would not have wished such a fate for his work and his life, and once again, with this last remark, it seems as if he is urging readers and critics to pay attention to his work and its objectives.

Finally, we should consider whether the autobiographical element manages to represent the aims, desires and passions of a whole generation, as was the case in Theotokas’s novel *Λεωνής* (1940) for example, or whether it remains a very personal work.<sup>16</sup> In *Αγνή*, there are certain remarks which aim to associate the characters with specific national characteristics. For example, Agni is associated with the values of Protestantism, namely honesty, directness, pride and courage, while Andreas – despite an ambivalence about his identity – is mostly associated with Greek characteristics; he is hard-working, sentimental and imaginative. Therefore, his own inclination for hard work is viewed as representative of his race: “ο Αντρέας έδειξε τόντις θαμάσιο κουράγιο – το κουράγιο, μπορεί να πη κανείς, της φυλής του, που χρόνια κ’ αιώνες

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<sup>16</sup> *Λεωνής* is mentioned in this analysis because it portrays the ‘artist as a young man’ in Constantinople, a counterpoint to Psycharis’s ‘artist as an old man’ in Lausanne. In Theotokas’s novel, one gets the impression that the main character speaks in the name of a whole generation and that his own situation in life represents a symptom of a collective crisis (see Melissaritou 1998: 222).

βλέπει του θανάτου το σπαθί από πάνω από το λαιμό της, και όμως ζη, ζη, δουλέβει και προκόφτει ολοένα” (166).<sup>17</sup> In the beginning of the novel also there is a comparison between Andreas’s qualities and those of his compatriots, and the narrator suggests that his flaws were characteristic of his origin: “Μισά τα κινήματά του [...] είχανε κάτι ακαταστάλαχτο [...] ναι, απαράλλαχτα όπως τόχουνε σήμερα τα κινήματα της φυλής” (17).

Nevertheless, even though, the self is the starting point for fiction, it does not manage to engage the others to create a more collective account despite the general remarks inserted in the narrative such as the ones mentioned above. The narrative is perceived only as a personal confession. This is because in Andreas’s thoughts and even in his discussions with Kamekos, the reader encounters only superficial observations about art and its various forms, which fail to engage him/her in a more in-depth consideration. Furthermore, Andreas’s love for Agni does not appear representative of other similar cases. The readers will find it difficult to identify with the characters; therefore, the readers can only assume the same role as the author/creator, as mentioned previously. It seems that Psycharis is addressing only his own kind, other intellectuals, and keeps his distance from other people: “[π]ερίεργα τα βόλεψε ο καημένος. Αποφάσισε να γράφη βιβλία, μυθιστορήματα, δράματα, και να τα φυλάγη στο σερταράκι του, για λόγου του – ‘Κατόπι, λέει, θα τα βρούνε!’ ” (20). Once again, a contradiction becomes apparent between the aims of the novel, which are to reach people and influence their way of thinking, and the proclamations of the author (through his character). Even if he does not speak in the name of a specific generation or group, there is little doubt that the author aims to make his fiction as real as possible in order to promote his views. This novel is, therefore, a clear

<sup>17</sup>This is a very positive remark on the part of the author, who usually reserves his scorn and criticism for the Greeks as in his novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφητα*. See, for example, the section on Greek society and culture in the period, in Chapter Seven above.



example of a very specific stance regarding the practice of literary writing. It exemplifies how poetry and real life can be connected reciprocally: “[...] τόσο στενά σε μερικά πνέματα συνεδέονται, τόσο βαθιά επηρεάζονται ποίηση και ζωή, ζωή και ποίηση, σε βαθμό μάλιστα που δεν ξεχωρίζονται και που χωρίς καμιά δυσκολία η ζωή καταντά ποίηση, όσο κ’ η ποίηση ζωή μας” (189).

### 3. Symbolism and music

For the narrator of this novel literary writing is a process activated by literature itself and not something external to it. He believes that literature has the potential to create more literature and also that any type of artistic stimulus can function as the starting point. In support of these views, the main character in the novel pays much attention to the environment in which he is working, his study/studies, his library, the decoration of his room overall. In particular, the books in his library function as a type of fetish, a symbol that shapes the experience of the poet: “[...] αγνάντεβες παντού ράφια και ράφια, ως το ταβάνι απάνω, με ολόδετα, ποικιλόχρωμα βιβλία. Έτσι ταποφάσισε η φαντασία του, ίσως και κάποια σκέψη φιλοσοφική. Στο σπουδαστήρι του, λέει, πρέπει κανείς απεριόριστα, πρέπει ανεμπόδιστα ναφίνη τη ματιά του να πετιέται, το νου του ναπλώνη τα φτερά του· ο τίτλος, η θωριά και μόνη ενός τόμου, άξαφνα, μπορεί να παρασύρη το λογισμό σου σε διανοητικά λιμέρια ξένα” (30).<sup>18</sup> The books, the lake, the ring, and the swan are some of the symbols which continually recur in the narrative in order to project the author’s views on life, love and literature. The more significant strategy though

<sup>18</sup>This was also the case for the professor in *H Άρρωστη Δούλα*, who had two different desks and an impressive library (see Psycharis 1907a, 227: 6)

throughout the narrative is the inclusion of music, thematically, symbolically, and as literary writing, replacing plain words.

If the aim of the autobiographical or quasi-autobiographical narrative is to connect poetry with real life, the aim of a symbolist narrative or, more generally, a symbolist context, is to connect music with poetry or literary discourse. The plot is not so significant in the narrative as is the depiction of a suggestive atmosphere and the portrayal of feelings experienced by the characters, which are invoked through music. Towards the end of *Αγνή*, for example, Chopin's "Marche Funèbre" helps to suggest an inner struggle between two forces that represent Andreas's psychological state: on the one hand, there is his happiness about his union with Agni, while on the other, there is despair in the music related to his realisation of the age difference between them, which must have been the same as that between the real-life author and his second wife, Irène. Andreas's illness is also marked by someone singing the same sad motif, which helps readers, if they imagine themselves listening to the music to understand Andreas's difficult position. Thus Andreas's life-threatening illness is linked with the music of the 'Marche Funèbre', which evokes death.

Another musical motif in the narrative is associated with that terrible unfaithful woman, who came to destroy Andreas's happiness. The musical phrases included in that part evoke sadness, and the words that accompany them are angry: "[v]as-tu t'en aller! ou je te jette à la porte!" (156). The meeting with this woman triggers Andreas's illness – his heartache which takes a literal form. But while he is sick, he sings yet another tune. As mentioned previously, all of the musical passages and the musical references included reinforce the impression of reading scenes from an opera (see Robinson 1988: 57-8). This suggests that the author has a tendency for literary experimentation, which can also be detected in his remarks regarding the

subjectivity of the view, as mentioned in the previous section. Therefore, as verisimilitude does not appear to be the major concern of the writer in this case, the narrative indirectly proposes the necessity of interpretation: “Έτυχε κάποτες να σας τραγουδήση και τραγούδια, να σας τα διερμηνέψη γλυκά, λέξη για λέξη, δίνοντας στην καθεμιά και και στην κάθε νότα, μια μυστική, μια κρύφια σημασία πόνου και αγάπης;” (170). The opposite could also be plausibly argued, that the author would like to view his own life as an opera.

The musical references, together with the allusions to the subjective view of the artist, whereby he endows even mundane things with special meaning, aim to create a symbolist context.<sup>19</sup> The novel begins and ends with the same musical phrase, tracing the events of the story, like the cycle of life itself. There are Italian, German, French, and then Greek songs repeated, at times, to emphasise specific moral judgements about characters and situations or to exaggerate the feelings of the main character. The author has created this evocative atmosphere in order to insert his views unobtrusively. As Christopher Robinson has pointed out, the identity and meaning of these musical phrases is revealed “as [each] chapter unwinds” and then, other phrases are introduced to extend the symbolic function of the initial ones, resulting in the creation of a signifying system which operates concurrently within the ‘realistic’ level of the text and on another level, accessible only to those who are able to make the relevant associations between the particular music and its reference to the text (Robinson 1988: 58).

Each musical phrase or piece has specific connotations in relation to the plot of the novel, and to the feelings of the characters. For example, the sound of church

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<sup>19</sup>The use of symbols in relation to the different connotations they assume in the thoughts of the main character, closely follows what Charles Baudelaire had described as “correspondances”: “L’idée d’analogie désigne dans ces conditions nouvelles un isomorphisme entre l’homme et le monde, l’animé et l’inanimé, un partage sur le fond d’une communauté d’essence, une adéquation présupposée au titre de condition d’un savoir et de la pensée en general” (Hirt 1998: 272). See also Paraschos 1953: 32.

bells introduces something connected to God; in conjunction with Agni's presence, this sound suggests the idea that Agni is a divine creature. Furthermore, the two characters, Agni and Andreas, share a mutual appreciation of music, which they both consider a source of inspiration and energy for work: Agni for cleaning the house, Andreas for thinking and writing.

Moreover, music offers a way out of the constraints of linear time. It makes the possibility of capturing an ideal time appear plausible. It creates a type of eternal moment, which can be revealed through continuous melodic sounds (Louka 2002: 11). Andreas feels that time is running out for him and is anxious to write another novel or drama to enhance the repertory of Greek literature while still hoping to experience love again. Music accompanies him in his thoughts and actions and helps him find some degree of equilibrium in difficult times. Accordingly, the narrator urges readers, at one particular part of the narrative, to attempt to experience with him that ideal moment which abolishes time. In a very poetic way, he refers to this experience as a moment of revelation, which cannot be measured by human standards as it escapes the conventional conception of time:

Μα τώρα, τώρα πια, σωπάστε, σας παρακαλώ. Δε μου λέτε τι να είναι το θάμα τούτο; Θάμα μοναδικό, τραγούδι μαγεμένο που δεν ψάλλθηκε ποτέ στην οικουμένη, τραγούδι του πόνου συνάμα και της νίκης, τραγούδι που από τα σπλάχνα του ανθρώπου βγαίνει και που απλώνει τα φτερά του, να πάη όσο αψηλότερα μπορεί. Και ποιο είναι το νόημα του τραγουδιού; Και σαν τι να λέη το τραγούδι; Το τραγούδι λέει πως ο θάνατος δεν υπάρχει, και πως δεν υπάρχουνε αχ! μήτε γεράματα μήτε απελπισιά, πως ακατανίκητη μνήσκει μέσα μας η ψυχή, πως είναι παράδεισος, πως είναι γλύκα μονάχη, πως όλο σου το είναι λιώνει, ενώ ανεβαίνεις προς ταπάνω, ενώ χύνεται, περεχύνεται στα μεδούλλια σου μέσα θεία ηδονή (followed by two lines of musical phrases) (127-8).

Psycharis's experimentation with music can be traced in the cultural climate of the

period that generated it. At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, music was perceived as a “paradigm for the other arts: in music one saw the completed development of the Romantic ideal still to be achieved in literature” (Hargraves 2002: xviii). “[...] its association with the direct and immediate expression of innermost emotion” (ibid: xii), justified its primacy among the arts and made it capable of rendering universal values. The musicality of language and the polyvalent artistic creation were projects that preoccupied a considerable number of artists of the period, like Mallarmé and Wagner, who also sought to create a mixed-genre spectacle, incorporating music, text, mime and dance (Forbes & Kelly 1995: 26).<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, at the end of nineteenth century Wagner and his music exercised an influence on the birth of the European symbolist novel, his musical techniques being followed even in the field of prose fiction (Louka 2002: 105); in particular the technique of the *leitmotif* which gives thematic meaning and structure as mentioned above. This climate of cultural experimentation must have made an impact on Psycharis, who tried to adapt some of these trends to his own literary writing. In *Άγνή* the author aims to combine different, and at times incompatible genres, like music and prose, in an effort to achieve a unique artistic work. In this case, the inclusion of musical phrases in written prose created a groundbreaking project. Psycharis experimented with this combination which was something unique in Greek literary productions of the period. As the narrator explained in the narrative:

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<sup>20</sup>“Wagner’s theories of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total art work incorporating music, dance and poetry [...] became known to a small circle of French admirers [...] After his death in 1883, the theories became better known through ‘La Revue Wagnérienne’, launched in 1885, by a recent graduate of the Conservatoire, Édouard Dujardin. By the time this review ceased publication some three years later, extracts from Wagner’s operas had become a regular feature of the Parisian concert scene, and for the next few years Wagnerian fever was at its height” (Forbes & Kelly 1995: 18). See also Grekou 2000. However, “Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk* had pointed the way to the ‘œuvre’ of the future but had failed to pursue its aesthetic and philosophical implications to their very limit” (Sieburth 1994: 795).

Καμιά τέχνη από κείνες τις πρωτογέννητες, που μέσα του ο άνθρωπος τις είχε, καμιά, πες τηνε φιλολογία, ζουγραφική, μουσική, καμιά δε δύνεται να εκφράση όλο μας το είναι· κ' έτσι, όπου ο στίχος δε φτάνει, έρχεται η νότα και σου ταποσώνει. Ο Αντρέας δεν ανακάτεβε ακόμη τις δυο τέχνες, δε σμίγανε οι δυο στη γραφή του μα ένας σκοπός του έδινε συχνά το κουράγιο που του έλειπε, όπως τη στιγμή τούτη, ο περίφημος σκοπός του Σαμπρίς” (26).<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore, for the objectives of this narrative, music represents more than a feature of cultural experimentation. It could be said that it functions as a replacement for speech, whether related to communication through language or not. It represents the universal language used and understood by all people, regardless of their differences: “[μ]ήπως και κείνονε δεν τονέ βοηθούσε το ίδιο; Τι πείραζε που η δουλειά τους διαφορετική; Πάντα δουλειά και πάντα τραγούδι. Καταλάβαινε αγάλια αγάλια ό,τι μια στιγμή προτήτερα του φαινότανε αταξία” (39-40). When closer to spoken language, in the form of song, music evokes immediate responses; it is present and cannot be ignored, and it marks certain moments with specific connotations.

The author must have been aware of the efforts of French Symbolist poets, like Stéphane Mallarmé, who sought to achieve the most harmonious effect in the use of French language and the closest association between sound and meaning; his own insistence on the correct use of language betrays a similar preoccupation. The references to music – tonality, melody, harmony – are connected with his views on language as analysed repeatedly in the essays of *Ρόδα και Μήλα*. For example, in one of these essays, in *Ρόδα και Μήλα Ε΄*, Psycharis suggests that the first manifestation of language is not the use of words but the formation of a ‘melody’, which helps to suggest to others specific feelings and intentions. He argues that this tonality has

<sup>21</sup>It is important to mention that by referring to the music and by including some of the passages. Psycharis gives an active role to the readers again, urging them not only to imagine the specific music in accordance with the scenes described in the novel, but also, perhaps, play the music themselves, in order to be able to understand better the emotions and the atmosphere that were conveyed in the narrative.



remained an integral part of all languages, and will continue to exist even if the vocabulary changes or declines:

Πολλοί γλωσσολόγοι νομίζουνε, πως γλώσσα θα πη μόνο λαλιά. Μα η πρώτη γλώσσα μπορεί να μην ήξερε και τόσες λέξεις. Ακόμη και σα μορφώθηκε, σαν έγινε γλώσσα, πιθανό να μην είτανε η λαλιά το σημαντικώτερο· η χειρονομία και κάποια μελωδία είχανε τότες πολύ να πούνε. Η μελωδία έμεινε και τώρα σε κάθε γλώσσα, γιατί αλλιώς μελωδούμε φρασούλα ερωτηματική, αλλιώς καταφατική φρασούλα, όπως τις ονομάζουμε οι βάρβαροι εμείς οι γλωσσολόγοι και γραμματικογράφοι (Psycharis 1909: 116-7).

In the same volume, in ‘a letter to Myriella’, the author insists that the careful writer should avoid hiatus, in order to create a harmonious effect in the use of language: “Να προσέχετε και σε κάτι άλλα, που δεν είναι ασήμαντα όσο φαίνονται, αν και δεν τα παρατηρεί ο αναγνώστης. Βγαίνει όμως κερδεμένος από τη γενική την εντύπωση, που του απομνήσκει από το διάβασμα. Εμένα η μανία μου άξαφνα είναι ναποφέβγω τη χασμωδία” (1909: 202). As he explained also in his *Ρόδα και Μήλα Δ’*, he sought to achieve harmony in his writing, following the advice of his friend Leconte de Lisle: “Ο Leconte de Lisle, συνήθιζε, καθώς και γνωστό, να προσέχη, όταν έκανε τους στίχους του, σε κάθε συλλαβή, στη θέση, στο ρυθμό, στη μορφή, ας πούμε και στο χρώμα κάθε λέξης [...] δε θυμούμαι αν ο μεγάλος μου φίλος, *αρμονία* το είπε ή αν το είπε αλλιώς” (1907b: 26, the emphasis as it is in the text).

Furthermore, according to the author, in the same way that music must be sung or performed in order to come to life, language must be spoken in order to exist. If language, like music, remains only written signs and notes, it is almost as if it is not a reality. Psycharis expands on this theme in the essay cited above, stating clearly that, “η γλώσσα η ανθρώπινη πρέπει να συγκριθή με τη μουσική· όσο η μουσική είναι *γραμμένη*, δεν υπάρχει· δεν υπάρχει φυσικά ούτε όσο είναι *άγραφη* και μνήσκει μέσα μας· για να υπάρξη, *απαραίτητο νακουστή*” (Psycharis 1909: 118, the emphasis as it is

in the text). Only that way, when language is spoken, is part of real life and not some artistic expression. Music, as pointed out above, almost suggests readers try to sing it or play it. Similarly, it is as if the narrative written in a demotic language demands that readers become fully engaged and speak in that language. Significantly, one of the few reviews of this novel, by Rigas Golfis, was published in *Noumas* and used a similar vocabulary and almost the same expressions as the novel in order to present it to the Greek public (1913, no. 511: 160-63 & no. 512: 175-78).

While music helps to illustrate the characteristics of speech, by contrast, writing is represented as ‘absence’, associated with the character’s self-imposed exile in Lausanne, and the two different studies in his home, one being always empty. It is not without significance that Andreas always starts from a musical motif (from speech) in order to find inspiration and proceed with his literary writing.<sup>22</sup> A deviation from the emphatic proclamations about truth and verisimilitude is noted. “If, as Walter Pater claimed, all arts aspired to the conditions of music, it was because music exemplified a purely abstract, nonfigurative, nonrepresentational art, an autotelic event whose very form *was* its content” (in Sieburth 1994: 796, the emphasis as it is in the text). As Verlaine pointed out with reference to poetic expression, “De la musique avant toute chose! Tout le reste est littérature” – something with which Palamas also agreed. In the narrative it is almost as if music surpasses language and becomes like a refuge for the artist, when language can no longer fulfil the demands placed on it by him. This is obvious when Andreas fights with himself, questioning the fate of his union with Agni, and the narrator resorts to presenting his psychological turmoil by including (transcribing) various parts of Chopin’s ‘Marche

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<sup>22</sup>Speech has always been considered as directly linked with the human subject. “Speech is seen as immediacy, presence, life and identity, whereas writing is seen as absence and difference. Speech is primary, writing is secondary”, explains Farinou-Malamatari with regards to Kazantzakis’s work (1998: 24). The above distinction becomes apparent in Psycharis’s novel as well.

Funèbre' in the narrative (pp. 124-32), instead of explaining to readers with more words, how the character must have felt.

#### 4. The conditions for literary writing

##### 4.1. Writing as solitude, absence, distance

As in the rest of Psycharis's novels, one of the themes presented is the actual act of writing fiction. The role of the writer, and generally the artist, is considered very significant. Artistic creation is related to two necessary elements in the narrative: the one involves the exile of the artist (Kristeva 1986: 298) and the other, in contrast, his relations with women. One of the factors that impede artistic creation, however, is the limitation imposed on the artist by the time he has at his disposal. There is an emphasis in the novel on the common theme of man's anxiety about his mortality, which, in this case, prevents him from fulfilling his artistic ambitions.

Nevertheless, the solitude or even the exile of the artist and, in particular, of a writer of literature, gives him/her the freedom to exploit his/her creative flow without any hindrance. It allows time to think, as he/she does not have to deal with the everyday banalities of meeting friends or family and dealing with their demands. It is significant that Andreas exiles himself in Lausanne – “έννοιωθε σαν απαλλαγμένος, σαν πιο λήφτερος τώρα που απομακρύθηκε από τα Παρίσια” (22) – and the same was true for almost all the writers in Psycharis's novels: Yanniris leaves Paris suddenly, at the height of his fame, to return to his native island in Constantinople.<sup>23</sup> Asteris also travels around in various parts of Greece and Europe, never settling down.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Yannis Petroyannis, though not a writer, creates a certain type of writing in relation to nature when he finds himself in the absolute exile of an island in the South

<sup>23</sup> In *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897).

<sup>24</sup> *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1910-1).

Pacific (see Chapter Five).<sup>25</sup> Writing, as opposed to speech, involves distance and absence, and in absence the writer (real and fictional) discovers himself, and he thinks more clearly of how to reach his readership. However, his privileged space cannot be shared with others. The narrator of this novel, Andreas, gets upset when Agni and her aunt invade his space and his thoughts, and he allows some of his space to be shared only when he realises that he and Agni have a shared interest in music. It is also important that Andreas identifies with the poet in the story of *Lohengrin*, which invokes images of solitude, lucidity, and sensuality (Sieburth 1994: 790).

The main character in the novel also believed that choosing to live in Lausanne would include him in the list of the famous people who had spent some time there, and he perceived it as a positive step for his artistic development. He envisaged, therefore, achieving some distance from ordinary people, because of his impending fame and success. Thus the preference for a solitary existence is associated with the writer's desire to lead the masses, at least with regard to culture, however contradictory this might appear, and it betrays an aristocratic attitude similar to the one portrayed in Palamas's epic poem *Ο Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου* (1907).<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the desire for solitude reflects also a distancing from people in Greece. The narrator considers them incapable of understanding his literary preoccupations and justifies the character's choice to be alone, away from the cultural climate in Greece, as the only means of creating literature: “Οι ανόητοι! Τα ξόανα! [...] Πήγαινε να τους γράψης ρωμαίικα τίποτις παρόμοιο [...] και νακούσης τι θα σου πούνε οι μπουνταλάδες της Αθήνας και της Πόλης, που θαρριούνται απόγονοι του Περικλή. Σιχτίρ, που λέει κι ο Τούρκος. Μπρε παιδάκι μου, το έργο σου εσύ και σκεπούλα μην τους χαρίσης, τους ανίδεους” (48). In his *Ρόδα και Μήλα* also Psycharis argued that

<sup>25</sup> *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904).

<sup>26</sup> A tendency to preserve the intellectual's seclusion from the masses was apparent in literary works of the first half of twentieth century (see Carey 1992).

the fact that he lived outside Greece helped him to evaluate Greek culture better: “γιατί εμείς όλοι μας που ζούμε, όπως λένε, στην Εβρώπη, κι ο Εφταλιώτης κι ο Πάλλης κι ο Μαρκέτης κι άλλοι πολλοί, ξέρουμε και συγκρίνουμε. Όποιος όμως συγκρίνει, νομίζω πως ίσως κρίνει και καλύτερα” (1907b: 25/151). The motif of self-imposed exile, though, contrasts with Psycharis’s admission that he was not like the teachers who did not have any contact with the people, because he lived amongst ordinary people and tried to create stories about them: “εμείς δάσκαλοι δεν είμαστε· δε ζούμε στο γραφείο μας, περπατούμε στους δρόμους, γράφουμε για όλους, γράφουμε για τη ζωή, κ’ έτσι πρέπει νακολουθούμε το λαό, το λαό και μόνο” (Psycharis 1902b: 269). Discrepancies such as this between the views expressed in Psycharis’s critical essays and those put forward in his novels are characteristic of his personality and to an extent it is what makes his work multi-dimensional and contradictory. Therefore, the character, like the real-life author, finds in distance and absence from his own cultural background the necessary factors to develop his writing, the better to evaluate the culture to which his work aims to contribute.

#### **4.2. Women as inspiration for writing literature**

Another constant inspiration for the creation of literature was the love of a woman. Psycharis believed that the woman would bring him inspiration to continue his work, and the main character in the novel held the same belief. Women are also associated metaphorically with writing, as all the women in the life of the main character were dressmakers, and the act of sewing has metaphorical connotations with that of writing/creation (see also Moullas 1996: ρά’ν). Andreas explains in the novel that he had to love somebody in order to be able to write: “[π]ερίεργο. Για να γράφω,

για να πλάθη ο Αντρέας, δεν είχε ανάγκη από δημόσιο. Μα είχε απαραίτητη ανάγκη από γυναίκα. Έπρεπε ν' αγαπά, για να γράφει" (50). Similarly, Psycharis also explains in his correspondence to Eftaliotis that: "[γ]ια να γράψω τα *Δυο Αδέρφια*, χρειάστηκε φυσικά ναγαπήσω πολλές γυναίκες. Κουραστικό πράμα [...] Σου το είπα· πρέπει να με συμπαθήσης· η δουλειά μου το θέλει. Αμέ, βέβαια. Για να γίνη άλλο ρομάντζο, πρέπει να υπάρξη αμέσως άλλη αγάπη. Κοντά στο νου [...]" (Karatzas 1988: 624).

In *Αγνή*, the narrator informs readers about the birth of the love between the two characters and concurrently about Andreas's inspiration for his drama which is based on his life-story. The main point discussed is that the arousal of sexual feelings for Agni gives Andreas the energy to start writing his fiction. Thus love and work go hand in hand, as life and fiction are also mingled because Andreas takes inspiration from his work to act in his life: "Κι ομπρός. Πέτυχε λαμπρά το διάβημά του κι έτσι φανερώθηκε ακόμη μια φορά, πόσο η εργασία και η αγάπη αλληλοβοηθιόντανε στον Αντρέα. Επειδή αγαπούσε, τα πήγαινε πρίμα η δουλειά, και πειδή τα πήγαινε η δουλειά πρίμα [...] βρήκε τα λόγια τα κατάλληλα να μάθη από τη γριά εκείνο που γύρεβε" (74-75).

Despite Andreas's rather logical outlook on inspiration, we find in the novel the echoes of the romantic ideal of the Muses who come to help the poet. Andreas would, for example, take long walks to clear his mind and prepare it for work: "Ο περίπατος του έβαζε πάντα σε κίνηση το μυαλό του και σα γύριζε σπίτι, πλημμύρα του κατεβαίνανε οι καινούριες ιδέες στο μυαλό" (140). Sometimes, the new ideas that came to him were the result of his encounter with the Muses, who were everywhere in nature: "[μ]άλιστα, όταν περνούσε από το ρουμάνι, έλεγε πως κρυφές, ερωτεμένες, με πράσινα φορέματα διάφανα η καθεμιά τους, βγαίνανε οι Μούσες από διάφορες μεριές να τονέ χαιρετήσουνε, να του πούνε κανένα λόγο γλυκό" (140). In that respect, most



of the time, the poet is accompanied by his Muses, who were in love with him, while often, the role of guiding and inspiring love in the poet, is fulfilled by a human being. Just as in Andreas's life the Muse was the multi-talented Flora, in the real author's life this person was his beloved Olga, whom he mentions several times in his letters: "Τώρα κατάλαβες; Σήμερις δουλέψαμε μαζί! Δυσκολεβόμουνα κι αμέσως ήρθε και με βοήθησε, μου έδωσε χέρι. Τι να σου τα ξαναλέω; Μαζί ζούμε" (Karatzas 1988: 526). Therefore, the Muse was as much in love with the poet as he was with her, and without love there was no progress in his work.

Another view expressed in the novel is that writing absorbs all the energy of the main character, and it becomes the main activity in his life, which shapes his whole being. Without writing, the character and the author feels that he is in a state of limbo. The extreme effort put into creation requires the total concentration of the artist, just as a lover requires the total devotion of his/her partner. As the narrator explains, Andreas was no exception, finding love in his work, totally devoting himself to it: "Η αγάπη, στον Αντρέα, έμοιαζε με την εργασία του· όταν καταπιανότανε κανένα έργο, έπεφτε κατακέφαλα στη δουλειά, και όξω από τη δουλειά του, όξω από το έργο της ώρας, τίποτα δεν ύπαρχε για τον Αντρέα· βουτούσε αλάκαιρος, που να πης, μέσα στο νου του, καθώς κι όταν αγαπούσε, βουτούσε όλος μέσα στην καρδιά του. Και κει έμνησκε πια" (72). Love, and writing in general, are closely linked in Psycharis's ideological thinking, to the extent of becoming the same thing. In 1906, he wrote epigrammatically to Eftaliotis: "Σ' αγαπώ. Το μόνο που προφταίνω να σου πω. Για την αγάπη πρέπει πάντα ναδειάζη κανείς, γιατί και το γράψιμο αγάπη" (Karatzas 1988: 567). Through the association between love and writing in the narrative, and the ambivalent presence of the woman as Muse, it is implied that the

writer is always both a solitary figure and someone who has the privilege of a loving companion (the Muse).

## Conclusion

‘The temptations of autobiography’ led the author to experiment with an innovative style of writing, deviating from the faithful rendering of reality in fiction, but ensuring that he projected his beliefs for the future. In terms of creating a Symbolist novel, the author uses the following elements: the melancholy of the main character, associated with his unfortunate love affairs and his realisation that he was getting old, and the recurring symbols of the ring and the lake. Both function realistically in relation to the plot of the novel but they also offer other connotations: the ring is a symbol of love and death, as is the lake, which also reflects the character’s inner state. In addition, both are encountered as parts of Wagner’s operatic universe, which is recalled in the text through various references.

However, this novel is more than an attempt at writing a Symbolist work. I believe that Psycharis is once more writing a type of didactic-autodidactic narrative. *Άγνή* is part of his network of novels which presents specific ideas. Various techniques or patterns, which are similar to those in his previous novels, are also encountered in *Άγνή*. The author uses, for example, the usual technique of binary oppositions in order to promulgate his views. Apart from the dualism of the artist personified by Andreas and Kamekos (the one impulsive and sentimental, the other more organised), Psycharis uses binary oppositions in many elements in the narrative. All the events and the discussions in the narrative revolve around notions of ‘absence’ as opposed to ‘presence’, ‘life’ as opposed to ‘death’, ‘love’ versus ‘hatred’ or any

other binary opposition such as the pure woman contrasted with the promiscuous one. The use of opposites serves to emphasise the author's views in a clear, unambiguous way, as it becomes obvious to readers through context where the narrator's preferences lie. The ideal, bipolar scheme of success, repeated in many of Psycharis's novels, involves 'love' and 'glory'. The main character's approach to these is toned down in *Αγνή*. Love and glory are not represented as the absolute goals of the main character, as was the case in the first novel, *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*, for example. The author exhibits a self-deprecatory and humorous tone as to the significance of his work, and is almost apologetic for the time he dedicates to it as opposed to other activities. There is mitigation of the author's desire for love and glory (personal and professional success), and almost a sense of bitterness which arises from the realisation that there is never complete success in both these domains in an artist's life: "medio de fonte leporum surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat" (122). This betrays some maturity compared to the impulsiveness of the main character in the first novel (*Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη*), who is portrayed as invincible, and always successful in his sexual and artistic pursuits (see Chapter Four).

The ending of *Αγνή* is similar to the endings of the author's previous novels. Most of Psycharis's novels conclude in a similar way with the expectation of a birth or the announcement of a new life that will bring hope, justice, and happiness, and will rectify the mistakes and problems of the past. This approach aims to persuade readers of what lies ahead and the likelihood of the ideas expressed in the novel coming to fruition. Thus the characters and the ending are typical of his novelistic style, as is the projection of self, created most notably in the reference to the 'statue'. Furthermore, the author includes derogatory remarks about himself ("Αλήθεια! Εκείνος δημοσιέβει. Ο ανόητος!") (69), which aim in reality to reinforce his presence.

There are also several remarks about the Greeks, their history and what they appreciate in an artist, expressed in the main character's thoughts and through his endeavours. In certain parts of the narrative, the narrator tries to establish an implicit connection between the main character's story and fate, and that of the Greek nation:

Ορφανός πιο πολύ από κάθε άλλον ο Ρωμιός. Το χώμα όπου γεννιέται, ακόμη και σήμερα, σε τόσα και τόσα μέρη, δεν του ανήκει [...] ορφάνια και δυστυχία πάνε πάντα χέρι με χέρι στο Ρωμιό. Η τύχη να το δώσει να μεγαλώσουν τα σύνορα του, μαζί να μεγαλώσει κ' η ψυχή του. Μα μήπως και του ίδιου τότες η ζωή δε στάθηκε ζωή ορφανού, ορφανού όπως κάθε του πατριώτη; Αν είχε τόπο δικό του, στον τόπο του θάγραφε· η κλίση του προς τα γράμματα δε θα γύρεβε άλλους τόπους για να μπη στο δρόμο της τον ίδιο (205-6).

All of these techniques and the views expressed are characteristic of Psycharis's didacticism.

There are two recipients of the didactic aims of the novel: the author himself, and the Greek readership. In the first case, *Αγνή* is an auto-didactic novel. By projecting himself onto two characters the author tries to understand his own psychology and the way he functions in various circumstances. It is an attempt on his part to create his myth and his salvation. The idea of an artist, who follows his inspiration and is productive, appears repeatedly when reading the novel and it is as if the author wants to convince himself of his purpose in life. In addition, through the creation of this narrative, it is as if the past is permanently disposed of and buried. The biographical elements which refer to the author are appropriated by other (fictional) writers in the novel and thus the real-life author remains always secluded and almost untouchable. Passages in the novel refer to the main character keeping some of his work hidden in a drawer in the hope that it would be discovered in the future, suggesting that there was always something more left. In a similar way to the main

character. Psycharis never became completely accessible to the general public. One could argue that, as in the case of Proust, this narrative (art) “simultaneously erases, repeats, and redeems life”; in a way that the repetition of real life in literature is an “annihilating salvation” for the author (Bersani 1994: 861).

The readers learn by example that hard work is necessary if they want to progress. The role-model is Kamekos, who is a more approachable figure than Andreas, and his life-style closer to that of the readers. More specifically, regarding Greek culture, there is an implicit emphasis on the role of language which becomes music and is shared equally by people of different classes. However, the language of the novel is not always carefully phrased as was the case in *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναζιά*, and there are certain awkward expressions, as in Psycharis’s other works: for example, “όσο κι αν είναι ειλικρινός”, p.5, “της έδειξε διάφορο”, p.10, “σαν ωραματισμένη, μόλις έξυπνη”, p.12, and others. Nevertheless, where language is lacking, music operates in its place, as a universal language. With the aid of musical language, the author creates a type of novel comparable to those written elsewhere in Europe. The message for Greeks is that they should assimilate foreign influences creatively, and develop their own strengths and characteristics. It is also hoped that the Greek readership would not reject the author’s work or that of other expatriate writers as insignificant because it did not fit into the moulds or categories created by Greek critics. This possibility becomes obvious from the unfavourable comments and criticisms of the main character and his work included in the novel, which aim, in reality, to establish the value of this work. The same point is repeated also in Rigas Golfis’s review of the novel in *Noumas*: “διδασκαλία, παιδαγωγική, λογική, ψυχολογία και κριτική συνταιριάζονται με τα γεγονότα. Για τούτο το μυθιστόρημα του Ψυχάρη δε στενεύεται ίσα με τα ελληνικά φιλολογικά σύνορα. Πάει πιο πέρα.

Είναι μυθιστόρημα, να πούμε, έξω τόπου, και σε όποια γλώσσα μπορεί να διαβαστή [...] με τέτοιου είδους έργα θα γνωριστή κ' η Ελλάδα στη φιλολογία των πολιτισμένων λαών” (1913, no. 512: 178).

The unique character of this novel resides in its literary experimentation, expressed in the combination of an egocentric style of writing with the aspiration to create a polyvalent artistic creation, integrating musical references as well as musical phrases, parts of poems, and the beginning of a play with its transcribed dialogues. All of these different artistic expressions may not promote the unity of the narrative but manage to convey the points that the author intended to make, with an interesting deviation from a wry didactic tone. Psycharis envisioned a creative flowering of Greek literary production and was of the opinion that the Greek novel could be just as original and innovative as the European novel. That is why he experiments with autobiographical writing, which gives him the opportunity to include so many fragments of other artistic forms: a drama, poems, reference to a statue, musical phrases and songs from the opera. These different artistic forms corresponded to aspects of his personality and accordingly, he believed that all should be embraced since they were original expressions written for the benefit of Greek culture.

The author's anxiety and bitterness at the lack of appreciation of his work is obvious in the remark that the main character did not want to expose himself to public opinion and that the Greeks did not even honour their dead artists posthumously: “[σ]την Ελλάδα σήμερα δε βλέπουμε ούτε να θυμούνται τους πεθαμμένους. Μήτε είναι ναπορήσης. Ένα έθνος, για να είναι ικανό να τιμήση τους πεθαμμένους, απαραίτητο να τους κατάλαβε, όταν είτανε ζωντανοί” (215).<sup>27</sup> This comment seems to be prophetic, as very little was written about this particular novel, apart from the

<sup>27</sup>This is in contrast to his other country, France, where the people honoured their great cultural figures, as is mentioned in *To Ταξίδι μου*: “Ξέρει το Παρίσι να τιμά τα μεγάλα του τα παιδιά” (Psycharis 1993: 53).



remarks of Golfis, and even the distribution of the book in Greece was obstructed by narrow-minded officials who thought that its language constituted a social danger, as mentioned in *Noumas* by Tangopoulos (1913, 515: 212).

As a result of this lack of willingness to actively receive the novel, despite its interesting features, there have not been many further attempts at similar experimentation in Greek literature, however much the author wanted to direct the attention of the Greek public towards his work and to show them that art and narrative can take many forms (we can mention Kosmas Politis's *Εκάτη* as an exception). In his last novel in Greek, Psycharis not only uses himself as the inspiration for the act of writing but also, more importantly, he offers his own life, as the gift ("don d'une main mourante") to Greek culture, a gift that appears not to have been well received.<sup>28</sup> In the case of his last novel in Greek, one could apply Barthes's claim that writing is a solitary endeavour, which does not attain its aim, but possibly another aim, one which the author did not predict (in Savage, 1979: 439).

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<sup>28</sup>The reference to dying ('mourante') is indicative of the realisation that the author was reaching the end of his creative life and force.

## CONCLUSION

Towards the end of his life and career, Psycharis's creative strength abandoned him. He wrote some short plays with allegorical references, very limited in inspiration and without any originality, satirising the ideas that he opposed. The plays were "Έβα" (one act), "Το Αστέρι το Θαμπό" (one act), "Νεράιδα" (three acts), "Μαρσύας" (three scenes), "Η Μούσα" (one act) (see Thrylos 1954: 711).<sup>1</sup> He turned to more basic narrative forms and very simplistic reductive plots. It would have been a nice surprise for readers if the author could have produced another text like *Ταξίδι μου* at the end, describing, in the same playful style, what had changed since 1888 in Greek society and culture. It was not the case and, undoubtedly, his last fictional works do not do justice to his talent and are not a worthy epilogue to his more productive years.

However, if one considers the overall picture of his output, Psycharis remains one of the most prolific writers of his era. Even though his novels were not read by many people, it is important to stress that the role he played in the development of Modern Greek prose was paramount. In his prose and essays he emphasised the need for Greek culture to find an independent manner of expression and to cultivate the genre of the novel.

As Xenopoulos had pointed out in his speech marking his entry to the Athens Academy in 1932, referring to the development of Modern Greek prose, the novel was almost an unknown genre in the time of his generation, until Karkavitsas and

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<sup>1</sup>"Έβα" was published in *Nea Estia* (1927, 2: 596-99), "Αστέρι το Θαμπό" in *Nea Estia* (1928, 3: 537-39). Also, according to Valetas's bibliography, "Νεράιδα" was published in *Protoporia* (1929, 3: 69-78), "Η Μούσα", in *Protoporia* (1930, 4: 103-111), although it was written in 1926, and "Μαρσύας" in *Protoporia* also, (1930, 6-7: 169-73) (see Valetas 1980: 113).

others created it almost from nothing.<sup>2</sup> It is unquestionable that Psycharis's contribution to this goal was significant – even if Xenopoulos would probably not have included him in the group of novelists he considered as pioneers of the genre. Psycharis showed from early on that he was alert to issues regarding prose fiction in general, and the art of narration, and he was clear on the need to systematise efforts towards the expansion of prose, using the language of the people.

This thesis has looked closely at Psycharis's Greek novels in an attempt to analyse the author's views on culture, and to discuss the methods by which they were promoted (the didactic function of the narratives). In addition, the aim was to discuss the importance placed on literature itself through the prominent self-referential elements of the novels. The overall objective has been to make Psycharis's work better known by extensively analysing his Greek novels, something which has not been done before to such a degree.

After introducing the aims and methods of the thesis and placing the author in the cultural context of his period, I have discussed the views on language that influenced his writing of literature. I have referred to the narrative features that define the didacticism of the texts overall, and discussed in detail the short story *Ο Μάγος* (1892), which is an example of the author's cultural ideology. I have indicated the innovative mode of writing in *Το Ταξίδι μου* (1888). I have explained how the author tried in his next novel, *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897), to achieve an ambitious task: to present his views on science and fiction, and how evolutionary theory could be applied to society. In this novel, the main character is driven by an ambition to

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<sup>2</sup>“[...] το Μυθιστόρημα ήτο σχεδόν άγνωστον εις την Ελλάδα όταν ενεφανίσθησαν οι μυθιστοριογράφοι της γενεάς μου, από του Καρκαβίτσα και εδώθεν. Αυτοί ηδυνήθησαν, όχι απλώς να προαγάγουν το είδος, αλλά και να το δημιουργήσουν σχεδόν εκ του μηδενός, ευρεθέντες εις την ανάγκην να εργασθούν χωρίς καλλιεργημένην γλώσσαν και χωρίς αξιόλογον παράδοσιν” (in Xenopoulos 1972: 318).

understand the world methodically, following the insights of science; this reflects the author's convictions and optimism regarding the importance of science. I have analysed the novel *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* (1904), which presents the author's beliefs about society, in accordance with Aristotelian philosophy, and the importance of language in the process of social integration. I have suggested that the narratives *Η Άρρωστη Δούλα* (1907), *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921), and *Η Νίκη του Πόνου και της Αγάπης* (1914) exemplify the author's views on the importance of 'truth', in fiction as well as a moral stance towards life. Psycharis believed that people's actions should be consistent with their beliefs, and he also emphasised the importance of expressing everything honestly and sharing problems and thoughts with other people.<sup>3</sup> I have argued that his belief in the development of Greek prose, led him to consider any type of material – even his personal correspondence – suitable to be turned into fiction, as was the case in *Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου* (1921). I have discussed his attempt to define the 'Greek character' in the novel *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια* (1911) by analysing how the novel revolves around the theme of introspection and mirroring. Finally, I have tried to show that the autobiographical elements of the novel *Αγνή* (1913), are still part of the overall didactic tendency of the author's ideology, which in this case involves, his own lessons in life as well.

The objective of the thesis has not been to represent Psycharis's novels as accomplished works of fiction. The novels are tentative approaches, examples of what the fiction of the new Greek state should comprise. My analysis aimed to show the inconsistencies and contradictions from one novel to the next or even in the same novel. Despite the enthusiasm with which I undertook the research into this material which has been hitherto largely unknown or at least, largely ignored by the critics, it

<sup>3</sup> As he pointed out in the introduction to the manuscript of *Τα Δυο Αδέρφια*: "[...] αλήθεια θα πη να μην την κρύφουμε και στον εαυτό μας, αλήθεια θα πη να παραδέχεται κ' η καρδιά μας την αλήθεια που ο νους μας φανερώνει (1903α: ι').

was not my intention to reinstate the novels. However, I believe that Psycharis's novels deserve further consideration. As a consequence of the Language Reform of 1976, we can now evaluate them independently of the confrontations that were caused by the language issue, and try to understand their larger ideological contribution. I do not suggest that it is possible to isolate or ignore the author's linguistic proposals, since the establishment of the demotic language was what he fought for all his life, and this resulted in the apparent excesses in the process of writing in support of this cause. However, it is worth examining all the other views he put forward in his novels with regard to Greek society and culture. These elements have been largely overlooked to date.

The author's commitment to these views and aims inevitably marked the novels with his vision of cultural reform, and the need to transfer it to the Greek context, to convince other people, is more than apparent. The main features defining his cultural views and mode of narration can be summarised in the following manner:

Psycharis's original narration focuses on the promotion of his views and often does not comply with the requirements of narrative economy. His belief in a common cultural inheritance from which all writers of Western literature could use ideas and stylistic expressions to recreate different narratives according to the needs of each period and society was another original element. The most celebrated precursor of the author's mode of writing is Homer because his main belief was in a literature written by the people, for the people, as was the case with the Homeric epics. He often insists in his writing that the successful novelist, “[μ]υλεί για το λαό και σαν το λαό” (1902b: 156). Dante was another influential model because of his support for the dialect of his period as opposed to the official language. Moreover, Psycharis often referred to Sophocles' tragedies, and part of the concept in *Άρρωστη Δούλα* is based on the

latter's tragedy *Philoctetes*, in which the ancient tragedian depicts the consequences of an unfortunate illness, arising from Philoctetes's being bitten by a snake. An analogy can also be established with Socratic philosophy; furthermore, the ancient saying "Knowing thyself" attributed by Plato to the Seven Sages, seems borne out by the actions of characters in *Τόνειρο του Γιαννίρη* (1897) and *Τα Δυο Αδέρφη* (1911). In that respect, Psycharis believed in the creation of a prose which would include elements from other literary texts but present them in an original way, indicating the writer's individual outlook and style.

One of the most important features overall was the reformative function of the novels, expounding the significance of the novelist in showing his readers their true identity, and helping them realise their potential. Even though they mark a contrast with the prose that was written at that time in Greece, they were written with a Greek readership in mind, and with the aim of addressing the needs of Greek literature: delivering it away from the archaising or *katharevousa* style, making it more vivid and accessible for all people, not only for other intellectuals. Furthermore, Psycharis envisioned a more dynamic response to changes, and hoped that Greeks would rise to the challenge of European culture by understanding and making use of their real strengths. In accordance with his most significant work, *Το Ταξίδι μου*, he drew attention to standardised communicative methods in Greece that had become meaningless and the urgent necessity for Greek culture to find its true natural language and the true path of progress. In his views his own role as a novelist was crucial for this transition to the new prospects of the nation:

Η ζωή μου είναι της Γαλλίας. Ό,τι είμαι, στη Γαλλία το χρωστώ. Την αγαπώ σα μητέρα και σαν πατρίδα. Έγινα παιδί της στην ώρα της δυστυχίας και της θλίψης· πως να μην τη λατρεύω; Γεννήθηκα όμως Γραικός και δεν μπορώ να το ξεχάσω· έχω χρέη και στην Ελλάδα. Θέλησα να της το δείξω. Αφού δεν μπορεί να της είμαι χρήσιμος στον πόλεμο, τουλάχιστο πολεμώ για την εθνική μας



γλώσσα. Ένα έθνος για να γίνη έθνος θέλει δυο πράματα· να μεγαλώσουν τα σύνορά του και να κάμη φιλολογία δική του. Άμα δείξη που ξέρει τι αξίζει η δημοτική του γλώσσα κι άμα δεν ντραπή γι' αυτή τη γλώσσα, βλέπουμε που τόντις είναι έθνος. Πρέπει να μεγαλώση όχι μόνο τα φυσικά, μα και τα νοερά του τα σύνορα. Γι' αυτά τα σύνορα πολεμώ (Psycharis 1993: 37).

It is worth pointing out that, even though it is obvious that the author wanted to convince readers, it was equally important for him to be able to express himself regardless of the opinion of others, however contradictory this may seem. That is why he did not necessarily require their endorsement; on the contrary, his spirit thrived on opposition. The way in which he tried to adapt the novels to the psychology of the Greek people through a dialogue with the prospective readers testifies to this (see also Chapter Two, p.63). The preoccupation with truth is another constant theme in his work, as explained above. Moreover, the author experimented with different forms of narration. The experimentation with music in *Αγνή* (1913) was an attempt to show the multiple possibilities awaiting prose writers in Greece.

However, as a result, Psycharis's efforts to achieve this honest approach in his literary writing ended up by being perceived as too personal. Despite his intentions, the novels were considered very careful constructions and were read only by a few people. The spontaneity of the language was lost amid the general remarks inserted in them, the various digressions from the plot, and the obtrusive presence of the author. Nor did the length of the novels help to make them more popular. At a time when the short story was the favourite literary genre, cultivated by most writers in Greece, Psycharis's novels seemed excessively long in comparison. Elias Venezis expressed his disappointment as a young reader at the very personal tone and the artificiality of the novels: "Δε λέγαν τίποτα σαν ουσία, σαν αλήθεια ζωής, σα μύθος. Δε λέγαν τίποτα και σαν κείμενα λογοτεχνικά, δε συγκινούσαν. Θυμούμαι την απογοήτευση

και. έπειτα, την οργή που δοκίμασα διαβάζοντας ‘Τα Δυο Τριαντάφυλλα του Χάρου’ [...] όλα εκεί ήταν ‘κατασκευή’ ” (1954, 55 (644): 589).

I remember that when I was in the first year of my first degree at University of Thessaloniki in Greece, a lecturer expressed disbelief at the author’s preferred themes and referred to Psycharis’s novels as not capturing the climate of their period. Having now read his work, I think that her remark was not entirely fair. If the social and political climate of his era is not adequately reflected in the novels, it is not because the author disregarded this socio-political reality and lived in a different ‘reality’ himself, or because the novels belonged entirely to the genre of the fantastic or exotic, although elements of these formed parts of some, like *Ζωή κι Αγάπη στη Μοναξιά* and *Το Ταξίδι μου*. It is because Psycharis consistently followed his beliefs and did not allow himself to deviate from his main objective of promoting the significance of the demotic language for the development of Greek prose fiction. His commitment to his work was such that he viewed it as a form of religion: “Η τέχνη! Η τέχνη μαθές σαν τι να είναι; Όπως κ’ η επιστήμη, έτσι κ’ η τέχνη άλλο δεν είναι παρά δουλειά, ιδρώτας και κόπος. Η τέχνη τεμπελιά δε θέλει· η τέχνη κούραση δεν ξέρει. Και σ’αφτό απάνω φρόνιμα θα κάνουμε να μιμηθούμε τον Heredia” (Psycharis 1903b: 138).

Even though the Greek intellectual establishment resisted his proposals, Psycharis was nevertheless accepted as the leader of the demoticist movement and he owes his renown to the Greek language issue and his views on Greek language and literature. In France, despite his successful academic career, he was known mainly as the son-in-law of Ernest Renan. It is reasonable to wonder whether Psycharis would have been different if he had lived in Greece instead of France: would he have been more or less polemical, more accepted by his compatriots, and his novels more influential and persuasive and less didactic? All of the above are possible. In any case,

the author's hard-working spirit and fervent beliefs would have found an outlet for expression.

Psycharis wanted to awaken an interest in the importance of culture for the progress of a nation and in prose fiction itself by giving examples of different narratives, marked by certain recurring themes and techniques. His main contribution to Modern Greek literature is his emphasis on the importance of prose for the cultural development of a nation (see Theotokas 1961: 197). Therefore, it is viable to agree with Petros Charis's view that Psycharis was a remarkable and unprecedented personality in the area of Greek letters, even if only symbolically: "Αλήθεια, όλ' αυτά είναι ο Ψυχάρης. Αλλά και κάτι παραπάνω: Μια από τις πληθωρικές εκείνες μονάδες, τις ανεπανάληπτες, τις ασυμβίβαστες, που γεμίζουν την εποχή τους, τη σφραγίζουν με βαθυστόχαστο, τον αποκαλυπτικό λόγο τους, και τις ανοίγουν δρόμους" (1980: 186). His vision was in advance of his times, even if his methods were not always correct or successful. Thus we cannot deny Psycharis the right to be associated through his efforts with the visionary figure in his short story *Ο Μάγος*, who looks into the hearts of his Greek people: "Ο μόνος ο νικητής είναι ο μάγος, γιατί ο μάγος άμα φανή, βλέπει μέσα στου λαού την καρδιά" (1902b: 237).

## APPENDIX

Ψυχάρης: Τα Δύο Αδέλφια. Πρώτη Σύνταξη I Μαρτίου – 19 του Αγ Δημήτρη

1903,

Κωδ. 4976

Αφιερωμένο στην κυρία Κ.Ν. Επισκοπόπουλο

Ψ.

### Αφιερωτικό Γραμματάκι

Αγαπητή μου κυρία,

Γιατί να μην αφιερώσουμε τα βιβλία μας στις κυρίες; Μήπως δεν πρέπει πρώτες αφετές, να μας διαλέξουνε τα έργα που γράφουμε για το έθνος; Μήπως η γυναικα δεν είναι το έθνος αφού η γυναικα είναι μάνα; Η γυναικα που κλοντίζει το έθνος με το παιδί της, κλοντίζει με την καρδιά της και το παιδί. Εσείς είστε οι αληθινές ψυχοπαλίστρες. Πρέπει εσείς να μας διαλέξετε, για να μάθουνε κατόπι και τα παιδιά τον αγίο το σκοπό που κνηγούμε, για να καταλάβη ο νους τους από μικρά την εθνική μας την Ιδέα. Ίσως πάλε και μες μπορούμε να σας ανταμώσουμε λιγάκι για τον κόπο με την αφιέρωση ταπεινή, αφού έτσι σας δίνουμε το τιποτένιο το πράγμα που λέγεται αθανασία.

Εσείς δεν την έχετε ανάγκη· έχετε άπρα ποιητή [end of page α] που θα σας τη δώσει, χωρίς να βγω τώρα καιγώ στη μέση. Μια το βιβλίο μου σας το χρωστούσα· είτανε χρέος μου να σας ταφιερώσω. Θυμούνται τις χαρισμάμενες μερες που σας είχαμε στο παλίο μας το ξοχικό, στο Ποσιμαπαμόνι, εσάς και τον αγαπημένο μου φίλο τον Επισκοπόπουλο, το καλοκαίρι που κοντά μας εκεί στο Τρεγκιέ, έβαζαν άγαλμα του πεθερού μου του Renan. Ιποτόν πάμε σταποκαλυπτήρια, και κατόπι, σε γυρίσαμε, άμα τέλειωνα ένα κεφάλαιο, σας το διάβαζα και τους δυο. Φύγατε πριν προφτάσω τα πέντε υστερνά κεφάλαια, και το λυπήθηκα, γιατί πολλές φορές με βοήθησε η ένας λόγος που μου λέγατε ή μια παρατηρήση που μου κάμνατε, ή τόσα και τόσα, που ποτε στανάλυνωσα, ποτε στον περματο, μου διηγούνταν ο άντρας σας. Εγώ τότες παντού, και στο σαλόνι όταν κατέβαινα το βράδι, και ταπόγευμα, σε βγαίναμε όζω, και στο Τρεγκιέ ακόμη με τις γιορτές, μέσα μου κονβαλούσα τα Δύο Αδέλφια, που αφτά συλλογιόμουνε που σας μιλούσα πάντα γι' αφτά. Κ' είτανε αλήθεια πράμα και θέμα μοναδικό, ένα πομπαικό πομπάντζο να σεργιανίζει, έτσι στην παρτίδα του Renan, στα πουμάνια του Ποσιμαπαμοιού [end of page β], στη χώρα της Μπερτανίας την ξακουστή, όπου και στα δέντρα και στις βρυσούλες και στα λυγκάδια και στα βονά φωλιάζονε του λαού τα παραμύθια, του μεγάλου λαού των Κελτών με την πλόουσα φαντασία, και μες τώρα μαθαίναμε στα δέντρα ελληνική λυαία, φέρναμε στα πουμάνια την Ελλάδα.

Ελπίζω να μην το παρακάμιαμε, να μην την παραφέραμε στο Ποσιμαπαμόνι, γιατί μπορεί νάνα και πράματα που καλά να μείνονε στην Ελλάδα, να μην τα βλέπουνε αλλού. Ο τόπος μας έχει τα καλά, έχει εννοείται και τα κακά του. Σε σας μόνον τα καλά του είδα. Μήπως δεν ταποδείχτει και η αφιέρωση μου από που λέω; Να που δεν το φοβήθηκατε να σας ταφιερώσω βιβλίο δικό μου, μήτε τον λόγο σας μήτε ο άντρας σας. Σες ζήτησα την άδεια και μου τη δώκατε. Και σας είπα να υποχρεώμενος με το παραπάνω αφού ως κ' οι φίλοι μου κάποτες αναγκάζονταν να

κρύφτουνε τόνομά μου. Φαίνεται πως καίει και δε γίνεται να το πη κανείς. Μερικοί μάλιστα δεν το λένε από φιλία για μένα, επειδή αν το λέγανε, υποθέτω πως άνθρωπο δε θα βρίσκανε να το διαβάση. Θυμούμαι τα ωραία εκείνα [end of page γ'] τάρθρα, τα ποιητικά, που έστειλε ο αγαπητός μου ο Επισκοπόπουλος στην Αθήνα για τις γιορτές που έγιναν τότες που είχαμε την τιμή και τη χαρά να σας φιλοξενήσουμε και τους δυο. Έγραφε “πως θάχη την εφτυχία να παρακολουθήση τις γιορτές, γιατί βρίσκεται σκεδόν από μήνα στη Μπρετάννια και κάθεται στο ίδιο το σπίτι του Ρενάν, στην εξοχή του Ροσμαπαμονιού, που τόσο την αγάπησε, που εκεί πέρασε τα υστερνά χρόνια της ζωής του και που την άφησε μόνο για να ποθάνη”<sup>1</sup>, δηλαδή στο Παρίσι. Σας τα μεταφράζω, μα τα μεταφράζω πιστά και κατασύλλαβα. Έπειτα, με ύφος μαγεφτικό μιλεί για τα ρουμάνια που περιτριγυρίζουν την εξοχή μας, για τη θάλασσα, για της Μπρετάννιας την ομορφιά.

Όσοι δεν ξέρουνε, τα διαβάζουνε αφτά και θαρρούνε πως ο καλός μου ο Επισκοπόπουλος αγόρασε στην Μπρετάννια ή νοίκιασε την περίφημη την εξοχή που κάθονταν ο πεθερός μου. Εμείς που ξέρουμε, καταλάβαμε. Αναγκάστηκε να μην ταναφέρη κάνε πως κατέβηκε, ή κατέλυσε, που λέει στου Ψυχάρη, γιατί αν έβαζε τον Ψυχάρη με τόνομά του, πιθανό να πάθαινε [end of page δ'] κι ο πεθερός μου, που γλύτωσε χάρη στην παράλειψη του καταραμένου ονομάτου. Ίσως θα βλέπαμε και χειρότερα, κ' ίσως τέτοιο νόημα φοβερό έχει κι ο τίτλος που βάζει εκείνη την ημέρα με γράμματα μεγάλα το Νέον Άστν. “Νέοι φόβοι περί εκρήξεως πολέμου”.

Αν όμως υπάρχουνε μερικοί που φοβούνται τους πολέμους, τους φίλους τους αληθινούς τους γνωρίζει κανείς από την προσπάθεια μάλιστα κι από τους κόπους που θα καταβάλουνε να σας πούνε κ' έναν καλό λόγο, καθώς τόκαμε τόσες φορές ο Επισκοπόπουλος για τα βιβλία μου, καθώς τόκαμε και τότε στο Τρεγκιέ. Χρειάζεται κάποια τέχνη για να το καταφέρη κανένας. Αφού σας μιλώ για την όμορφη την ανταπόκριση που έστειλε ταχτικά, στάγια τα χώματα, μη θαρρείτε, το παρατήρησα πως προτού μιλήση στο τρίτο άρθρο του<sup>2</sup> τόσο κολακεφτικά και με τόσους επαίνους για το λόγο που έβγαλα στο Τρεγκιέ, το δέφτερό του το άρθρο<sup>3</sup> συλλογίστηκε με πολλή εβγένεια να ταφιερώση στη γυναίκα μου, γιατί σε κάθε γραμμή βλέπω και παίζει [end of page ε'] ρόλο σημαντικό η κ. Ψυχάρη. Με τη γυναίκα τρώγεται πια κι ο άντρας. Τι να κάμης; Κόρη του Ρενάν! Δεν είναι δημοτική, δεν είναι το ζήτημα γλωσσικό. Η “κόρη του Ρενάν”<sup>4</sup> δεν είναι κυρία Ψυχάρη. Και για να το καταλάβη πιο ξάστερα ο κόσμος, της βγάζει κι όνομα καινούριο, η κ. Ψυχάρη Ρενάν<sup>5</sup>, ενώ εμείς την ξέρουμε κυρία Ψυχάρη κ' έτσι την ακούσατε πάντα στο σπίτι μας. Σα διάβασε την ανταπόκριση, μου είπε μάλιστα, όσο λίγο κι αν ταξίζω, πως λέγεται κ. Ψυχάρη, και πως της φτάνει.

Μα στην Ελλάδα δεν ταιριάζει να γράφη κανείς εκείνα που αλλού τα φωνάζουνε. Το χρωστώ και στη φιλία και στην τέχνη του γλυκού μου Επισκοπόπουλου που με γλύτωσε από κάμποσους μπελάδες. Ακούτε κει! Ο αντεθνικός, ο αιρεσιάρχης, ο μισέλληνας, να είναι γαμπρός ενός σοφού, ενός μεγάλου ανθρώπου, να ρητορέβη στο Τρεγκιέ, μπροστά σε τόσον κόσμο, να δημοσιέβεται ο λόγος του στη Γαλλία, στις γαλλικές φημερίδες, να σεργιανίζει στο Τρεγκιέ με πρωθυπουργούς, να δίνη στο ξοχικό του επίσημα τραπέζια σε υπουργούς κι άλλους τέτοιους, αι! αφτό πια δε [end of page ς'] γίνεται. Να το κρύψουμε. Και πολύ

<sup>1</sup> Νέον Άστν, 4 του Σετέβρη, 1903, σελ.1., στ.3.

<sup>2</sup> Νέον Άστν, 11 του Σετέβρη, 1903, σελ. 2, στ. 2.

<sup>3</sup> 10 του Σετέβρη, σελ.1, στ. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup> Τρίτο άρθρο, 11 του Σετέβρη, σ.2, στ. 2.

<sup>5</sup> 10 του Σετέβρη, σ.1, στ. 2.



φρόνημα ο φίλος μου ο Επισκοπόπουλος είχε την πρώτη φορά πως το πρόγεια το δίνει στίρι μας η “κόρη του Ρέναν”, τη δεύτερη πως το δίνει το πρόγεια “η κυρία Ψυχάρη Ρέναν”, ώστε μπορεί να υποθέσει κανείς πως έλπειται, το τι έγινε στο πρόγεια, το τι ακολούθησε κατόπι, θυμάστε; στο λαιμάρι μας το ταξίδι – το επίσημο – αυτά δεν ταίριαζε νακουστούνε στην Ελλάδα, την τύχη και μαθεφτή πως ένα παιδί της κάπως την τίμησε ως και σ’ ένα περφόρμιν Ρομπινσόν.

Με διαβάσετε και θα χαμογελάται, γιατί θα σας φαίνονται όλα έβλαα εδω, σαν είδος ξακολούθηση του ρομπάντρου που σας αφιέρωνω. Είναι ηθογραφικό, τουλάχιστο προσπαθώσα τέτοιο να γίνει. ηθογραφικά κι αυτά που σας διηγώμαι. Η Ελλάδα μας έχει ακόμα να προκόψει. Εφτυγισμένη εσείς που η καλή σας η μοίρα σας προκίσει με τόσα πολυτήρια χαρίσματα, και όλα μαζί δεν τάχει καμιά, με τόσους θησαυρούς, τον άπιαστα σας, το παιδί σας. Γνώρισα, και σας τόλγαια μια [end of page 5] μέρα, τον Επισκοπόπουλο πριν ιδία σας τον γνωρίσετε. Πάτα στάθηκε φίλος πιστός, κι αυτό μικρό πράμα δεν είναι στην Ελλάδα, όπου μπορεί να κουράζονται πιο γρήγορα ως κ’ οι φίλοι. Βέβαια, έτυχε κάποτε να μαλαώσουμε, κάποτε να τσακωθούμε. Που δε γίνονται αυτά; Είμαι βέβαιε και γέρος· σνηθίζω και τα λέω παστρικά, μάγια σε κείνους που αγαπώ. Τον αγαπώ τον καλό μας τον Επισκοπόπουλο χρόνια και χρόνια, όχι μονάχα για τη φιλία που μου δείχνει, μα και για την αγία του τη μεγάλη. Ο Επισκοπόπουλος είναι ποιητής. Έχει όμως και κάτι άλλο, που κάθε ποιητής δεν τόχει· στα έργα του όπω και στο νομ του, αδεφώνετα η φαντασία με την κρίση, με την κρίση την ορθή. Ιπότερημα σπουδαίο και σιμμεντικό. Ξέρει να κρίνει, ξέρει να βλέπει με μάτια δικά του, δίχως πρόληψη, δίχως ιδέες παμμένες από άλλον, ολοέτοιμες, ολόκληρες ιδέες, που ο κοινός ο κριτογράφος τις σερβίρει μάνι μάνι στο τραπέζι, γιομίζει πρώτα το στομάχι του, έπειτα και το στομάχι του αναγνώστη. Ο Επισκοπόπουλος που καθώς μου έλεγε, μάλιστα πάτησε σκοπέλι, σαν είτανε παιδί, έμαθε όσα ξέρει, και ξέρει άπειρα, τήμαθε από δάσκαλο καλότερο και πιο ανεξάρτητο, τήμαθε από τη ζωή. Για τούτο είναι ανεξάρτητος κι ο νους του. Διάβασε, διάβασε, μεθυσσε [end of page 6] στο διάβασμα, μεθυσσε στη μελέτη, μα μήτε η μελέτη μήτε το διάβασμα δεν τον κόψανε την αυτομική του, τη σωστή κρίση. Μονοδιάχτος και λήστερος. Η μονοδιάχτια μπορεί όμως να χύει και τα καλά της. Θάρρει κανείς πως αφού τα διδάχηκε όλα μοναχός του, μοναχός του έγινε ικανός να ποφασίζει και για όλα. Τέτοιος ο Επισκοπόπουλος δεν είναι. Ξαν πιάσει να ζήσει τα συρτήματα κανενός, δεν κοιτάζει μόνο το βιβλίο, πολεμά να ζει διάχτια και με το σκοπό η με τι μέσα γράφει. Προσπαθεί, που να ποβίε, να μην στην ψυχή και στο νου του σγυραφέα, για να καταλάβει καλήτερα και την ιδέα και τον τρόπο που βρήκε να μας την παραστήσει. Κ’ έτσι κρίνει με άκρη αμεροληψία. Τυχαίνει συχνά μάλαιστα, εκεί που βρικόουνε τα λάθια, να μας ζει διάχτια άξια και τίποτες που δεν είναι υχαμνό. Κρίνει με αγάπη και σ’ αυτό βοηθείται από την ποιητική της καρδιάς του. Ο ποιητής στα σπλάχνα του ζή· η και στα ωραία διηγώματα, απ’ όσα έχει τα διηγώματα της κ’ η ψυχή γιατι μέσα τους η άδολη ψυχή τους χύνεται και τη βλέπουμε σαν το καθαίο το νερό, που κάποτε το σβύνει της κάπως το θολώνει, κάποτε, όσο βαθεία κι αν είναι η λίμνη [end of page 6] όσο γερά κι αν αγγίζουν το χώμα τα κατωμένα





καταφρόνιο δε φοβάται, όπως δε φοβήθηκε ούτε το χρέος ούτε τη μάχη, όταν έπρεπε να φανή. Το σέβας που εμπνέει μεγαλώνει και πάει και ποτέ του δεν περνά.

Τι να σας πω για το παιδάκι σας, για τη θυγατρουλά σας, αφού έχει τέτοιον παπού και τέτοιον πατέρα; Μήτε το κοριτσάκι σας δεν το είδα· τάκουσα όμως. Άκουσα τα λόγια της τα χαριτωμένα, που σας τάγραφαν από το σπίτι, ενώ είσαστε σε μας, και που μου τα ξαναλέγατε, γιατί το ξέρετε πως αγαπώ τα παιδιά, πως αγαπώ και τη γλώσσα μας. Όπως είναι η γλώσσα της μικρής σας αληθινή κι αχάλαστη, έτσι θα της μορφώσετε και την ψυχή της. Τι δύσκολο πράμα η ανατροφή ενός παιδιού, και τι σπουδαίο! Πρέπει να προσέχουμε και να μην προσέχουμε, πρέπει πότε να νοιώθουμε, πότε και να σφαλνούμε τα μάτια [end of page 17]. Το μικρό, το ασήμαντο ακόμη πλάσμα, που είναι σάρκα της σαρκός μας και ψυχή της ψυχής μας, έχει ωστόσο και δική του σάρκα, έχει ψυχή δική του, δική του ύπαρξη. Αδύνατο να παιτούμε να μας μοιάζει σε όλα, δηλαδή νάχη τις ιδέες, τις συνήθειες, ως και τα προτερήματα που είχαμε στην ηλικία του εμείς. Σα να παιτούσαμε τάχα να μην είναι του καιρού που γεννήθηκε, παρά του καιρού που γεννηθήκαμε. Πιο σωστό μάλιστα μου φαίνεται να παιτούμε να μη μας μοιάζει, Έτσι προδέβει ο κόσμος· έτσι και μεις, προβλέποντας την πρόοδο που θα γίνη, θα ξαναζήσουμε στα παιδιά μας, ίσα ίσα γιατί θα μας συνεχίσουν και για τούτο δε μας μοιάζουνε. Απόλυτο σύστημα στην ανατροφή δεν υπάρχει. Κάθε παιδί θέλει να αναθρέφεται κατά το σκαρί του. Κάθε ανατροφή αλλάζει με την εποχή της. Δικαίωμα δεν έχουμε να πνίξουμε το πλάσμα το μελλούμενο που μέσα του κρύφτει, όσο κι α δε φαίνεται, το παιδί μας. Είναι πλάσμα καινούριο, αφού βγήκε από μας. Πρέπει να είμαστε με τα παιδιά μας σαν τον ποιητή που στα γλυκοχαράματα πάει να χαιρετήσει τη δημιουργία, να βάλουμε ταφτί μας για να ακούσουμε τι τραγούδι τραγουδάνε τα νιογέννητα πουλιά, τι νιοφερούγιαστη ψυχή θα ξυπνήση στα σπλάχνα [end of page 18] του παιδιού μας. Δεν πεινάει μόνο το στομάχι· πείνα έχει κ' η καρδιά. Χρωστούμε να μάθουμε και με το παιδί μας αν έχει όρεξη και για τι πράμα, τι θέλει να φάη, ποια είναι τα γούστα του, η κλίση του κ' η τάση του μικρού του οργανισμού, που ίδιο του ακόμη δεν το νοιώθει. Για τέτοιο λόγο, η ανατροφή της γυναίκας είναι σήμερις ζήτημα σπουδαίο. Η γυναίκα δεν έχει τη θέση που της πρέπει. Πιο αναπτυγμένη στην Ελλάδα, πιο καλλιεργημένη από τον άντρα, ωστόσο τη βλέπουμε λιγάκι σα νάναι σκλάβα του αντρός. Δεν ταιριάζει. Το κατάλαβε κ' ίδια της πια. Να μην τρομάξουμε το λοιπόν όταν άξαφνα το κοριτσάκι, που εμείς τόχουμε για νόστιμο κουκλί, και παίζουμε μαζί του, κάποτε, ως και στο παιχνίδι, αρχίζει και δείχνει ανεξαρτησία. Δε μας φαίνεται τίποτις και το μαλλώνουμε κιόλας, ενώ μέσα του ετοιμάζεται καινούριος αιώνας. Αιώνας εφτυχισμένος, γιατί δεν μπορεί έθνος να προκόψη, όσο η γυναίκα μνήσκει πίσω, και με τη γυναίκα το παιδί. Συντρόφισσα είναι του αντρός· δεν τον ακλουθάει, πλάγι του βαδίζει· μπορεί και να τον ξεπερνά. Τα μεγάλα τα κατορθώματα δε γίνονται στον κόσμο δίχως τη συνέργεια, δίχως της Γυναίκας την Αγάπη.

Φόβο κανένα δεν έχω για τη μικρούλα σας, αφού [end of page 18] είστε μητέρα της εσείς. Θα μου δώσετε την άδεια να πω και για σας δυο τρία λόγια. Το ξέρετε πως κοπλιμένα δεν κάνω. Αξίζετε όμως. Η ανατροφή σας η τέλεια βέβαια είναι πράμα που το χρωστάτε στον πατέρα και στη μάννα σας την αγαπημένη. Δε θα σας παινέσω για την ανατροφή σας. Μα εσείς έχετε, όπως λέγαμε ψυχή που μονάχη σας κάματε να είναι ό,τι είναι, ψυχή που της δώσατε σφραγίδα δική σας. Σφραγίδα, δεν το λέω αχαμνά. Είναι ανεξάρτητη συνάμα και κλεισμένη, λήφτερη και δειλή, σα συμμαζεμένη μέσα της κι ωστόσο με ταφτερά της. Ποίηση, φαντασία, θάρρος δεν της λείπουνε. Μα με την ντροπή εκείνη που είναι το στολίδι το γυναικίσιο, φυλάγετε στο στήθος σας την ψυχή σας, ίσως γιατί ξέρετε πως είναι θησαβρός. Τη συγκρίνω με πουλί που κάποτε τραγουδάει και που δε φαίνεται ποτέ του. Το τραγούδι της όμως

τακούσαμε στην εξοχή, και γω που γυναίκα δεν είμαι, δεν έχω λόγους να ντρέπουμε σαν και σας· μάλιστα θα με πήτε κι αδιάκριτο, μα δεν πειράζει. Τα τραγουδάκια σας αφτά δεν τάκουσα, τα διάβασα στο λέφκωμα της κόρης μου, και να πήτε ό,τι θέτε, δε βαστώ, θα σας ταντιγράψω, αν και τάχετε γραμμένα γαλλικά, ωραία γαλλικά που πολύ άσκημα σας τα μεταφράζω [end of page ιζ']. Να δούμε αν τα θυμάστε.

“Όταν οι γέροι περπατούν, το βήμα τους με ταραίζει· γιομάτη σέβας, στέκουμαι λιγάκι, βαδίζω πιο αργά, τους αφήνω να περάσουνε, για να τους μελετώ καλύτερα, πιο ήσυχα, και για να μη δούνε τη νιότη μου.”

Δεν είναι ωραίο, πήτε μου, και δεν είναι κρίμα να κάθεται μοναχό του σ' ένα λέφκωμα;

Αμέ τούτο·

“Σε έναν κάμπο ψιλολουσμένο από θολάδα φωτεινή κι από μυρουδιές, να γύρη το κεφάλι του κανείς απάνω σ' ένα λουλούδι, να βυθίση την ψυχή του στην ανυπαρξιά.”

Αφτό θα το στοχαστήκατε στην Μπρετάννια, όπου έχουνε και του ήλιου οι αχτίδες κάποια θολάδα μυστική. Μα δεν ξεχνάτε το παιδί σας και γράφετε·

“Η μάννα η πιο εφτυχισμένη απ' όλες θάτανε η μάννα που μπόρεσε, που θάξερε να ξαναζήση τα χρόνια της τα παιδικήσια χάρη στο παιδί της, κ' είναι η μόνη ζωή που αξίζει να την ξαναζήσης, αφού είναι ζωή αγνότης κι ανηξεριάς.”[end of page ιη']

Σας φύλαξα για το τέλος και τομορφότερο

“Σα δείχνεται κανείς λιγώτερο στη ζωή, αντίς να γίνεται μικρός, μεγαλώνει”. Και μάλιστα, όπως τόχετε γραμμένο: Γίνοντας πιο μικρός, αναπτύγεται.

Βέβαια, πολύ σωστό – πολύ γυναικίσιο. Η περηφάνια μικραίνει τον άνθρωπο, τον κονταίνει, αντίς να τον υψώση, που το θαρρούνε μερικοί. Να κάθεται κανείς στην κοχίτσα του ήσυχα, νακούη τι λένε γύρο του οι μεγάλοι, σιγά σιγά να πετάη ο λογισμός του από την κουβέντα του ενός στου άλλου την κουβέντα, με τα λόγια τους ολωνώνε, αφού, διάλεξε τα πιο καλά, μέλι να κάνη και το μέλι μέσα του να το βαστά, είναι ωραίο ιδανικό. Είναι ωραίο ιδανικό, σιωπηλή, αφωσιωμένη, να θυσιάζεται η γυναίκα για τον άντρα, η θυσία νάναι το μεγαλείο της, να βαδίζη με του αντρός την ιδέα. Κι ωστόσο τι να σας πω; Εγώ θα σας παρακαλέσω σήμερις νακούσουμε τη φωνή σας – για τη δημοτική. Τα ωραία πράματα που γράψατε στις κόρης μου το λέφκωμα, ένα ελάττωμα έχουνε, που δεν είναι στη δημοτική. Τώρα να ρεκλαμάρετε τα βιβλία μας, δηλαδή να τα διαβάσετε και μου το τάξατε. Δε λέω τα δικά μου· τα δικά μας λέω. Αφτά έχουμε· αφτά πρέπει να ξέρουμε. Αφτά πρέπει ναγαπούμε [end of page ιθ'], για ναγαπήσουμε συνάμα και την καινούρια μας την πρωτότυπη φιλολογία, που ακούραστα δουλέβει, και την Ελλάδα, που για την Ελλάδα γίνεται η τόση δουλειά, και τα παιδάκια που ένα με ιδρωτα και με κόπο σήμερις πολεμούμε, θα τα βρούν έτοιμα μια μέρα.

Ωστόσο δεν πιστέβω, η μικρή σας γλήγορα να διαβάση αφτό μου το βιβλίο. Ακόμη και σα μεγαλώση, θα πρέπει να προσμένη. Δεν τόκαμα για τα κορίτσια. Μακάρι να μπορούσα να βάλω μέσα πρόσωπα που να μοιάζουνε με τα πρόσωπα του προλόγου μου τούτου! Ο πατέρας σας, ο άντρας σας, εσείς, το παιδί σας, θάτανε θείο πράμα να σας έπαιρνα όλους σας για πρωτότυπα. Τότες θάλεγα να με διαβάσουνε και τα μωρά. Εγώ δε φταίω που δεν το κατώρθωσα. Προσπάθησα να καθρεφτίσω, ας είναι και ζώπετσα, τη σημερινή μας την κοινωνία, την αθηναϊκή και την πολιτική. Ελπίζω να μην πειραχτή κανένας μ' αφτό που θα πω, μα δε μου φαίνεται η κοινωνία μας να παρουσιάζη στους μυθιστοριογράφους μόνο και μόνο πρόσωπα που και το πιο προσεχτικό το μάτι ψεγαδάκι να μην τους ξεσκεπάζη. Η αλήθεια είναι που η Ελλάδα [end of page κ'] τη στιγμή αφτή, βρίσκεται σ' ένα παράξενο σημείο. Σα βγαίνουμε



στον δρόμο της Αθήνας, σε στεγναιώνουμε, σε πλάμε στους φίλους μας, σαν αποκρινόμενα, τους λήψε και μας λένε καλημέρα ή καλησπέρα, ή ένα λόγο πουνίζουμε στα μαγαζιά βλέπουμε αθρόονους κάθε ηλικίας, τους μιλούμε, μας φέρνουν όπως και σε κάθε άλλον τόπο φέρνονται οι αθρόοι. Μας είναι λοιπόν πολύ δυσκόλο να φανταστούμε πως κανένας απ' αυτούς δεν είναι άθροπος, παρά πως είναι όλοι τους παιδιά. Ναι, παιδιά είναι, και μην ξεπιαστήτε, μάλιστα παιδιά που δεν έχουνε πάντα τη νοστιμιά του παιδιού· είναι παιδιά, επείδη και το έθνος είναι ακόμη παιδί. Μην το ξεχνούμε πως ανεξάρτητη Ελλάδα υπάρχει μόνο από τα χιλιά οχτακόσια χρόνια, δηλαδή πως πέρασαν από τότε, ως τα τώρα μόλις εβδομήντα χρόνια. Λοιπόν, ένας άθροπος εβδομήντα χρόνια έχει την ηλικία που έχει το ελληνικό βασίλειο· ένας άθροπος εβδομήντα τεσσάρω είναι πιο γέρος από την Ελλάδα. Πως θέλετε να μην είμαστε παιδιά; Να δήτε μάλιστα πως βρισκόμαστε κάποτε τον πατέρα μας με τη μικρή μας, την παιδικάκη την ηλικία. Ας υποθέσουμε πως σ' ένα πομπάντζο, ίσα ίσα όπως τόκαμα σ' αυτό μου εδώ [end of page κα], έχετε ανάγκη να βάλετε κανένα πρόσωπο που στο τέλος του πομπάντζου γίνεται οδόντα χρονώ γέρος. Δεν μπορείτε, ή τουλάχιστο για να μη σκουτάπη ο αναγνώστης, θα χρεωστήτε να μην πείτε πητά σε τι γρόνο γεννήθηκε. Αν το πείτε θα πείτε πως γεννήθηκε στα χιλιά οχτακόσια είκοσι χρόνια. Άνο χρόνια ύστερα από το Εικοσι Ένα! Δέκα χρονώ αργότερα χιλιά οχτακόσια επάντα χρόνια. Τρία χρόνια ύστερα από την προκήρυξη της ανεξαρτησίας μας! Τώρα σας πτώ· Είναι δυνατό τέχνης να μην άκουσε το παιδί που λήψε για τους αγώνες μας τους μεγάλους, όχι να άκουσε, μα και να μην τους είδε, να μην έπαθε ίσως απ' αυτούς; Αν άκουσε όμως, αν είδε, και αν έπαθε, δε γίνεται· ή εντύπωση στάθηκε τέτοια που δεν μπορεί να μην του αποτυπώθηκε του παιδιού το σπουδαίο το ιστορικό και στην ψυχή και στο νου του. Αν του αποτυπώθηκε πάλι; Θα νοιώθη, θα συλλογεται, θα ζή με παντάσχι άλλων τόπων, ύστερα από την Επαναστάση παρά πρώτα. Και τότε ο μυθιστοριογράφος έχει χρέος να δείξη, όσο ετυμολογείται ή ζωή του προσώπου αυτού, την αλήγη που γνώρισε, να πη τινάς, ακόμη και σαν εκλαίει στην κόννα του. Μα τότες αλλιάζει και το πομπάντζο. Βέβαια, κάμποσες αλλαγές, κάμποσες επαναστάσεις [end of page κβ] τάραξαν και την Εβρώπη, όχι όμως τέτοιες. Η Ελλάδα, πριν από τα χιλιά εφτακόσια οδόντα εννιά, έκανε Ελλάδα. Ταλλία έμεινε και κατόπι. Πάντα το ίδιο έθνος. Και σα θέλει, λόγου έκανε Ελλάδα. Ταλλία έμεινε και κατόπι. Πάντα το ίδιο έθνος, έφοκα τον χάρη, κανείς να παραστήση σ' ένα του μυθιστορήμα, γέρο εκάτω χρονώ, έφοκα τον παραστήσει, γιατί δεν είναι καιρός στα Παρία να ένας εκκατοντάρης, ο Chevreul, ο γυμικός, που με πολύ μικρές διαφορές, έννοιαθε και συλλογιούνται όπως όλοι στη Ταλλία.

Εμείς, στην Ελλάδα, μόλις γεννηθήκαμε. Μόλις ξυπνούμε. Και ξυπνούμε από ύπνο βαρή. Ξυπνούμε από τον ύπνο της σκαβιάς. Δηλαδή, μακάρι να είταν ύπνος! Μια δεν είταμε. Είταμε αλήθεια και για τουτό, αφού ξυπνήσαμε, τα όνειρα του ύπνου εκείνου του τροχέου ακόμα θαώοννε την ψυχή μας, ακόμα την παραδέρνοννε. Μιαβής είναι μονάχα ο ουρανός μας. Ο νους μας είναι συννεφιασμένος, ο νους μας στέκεται πάντα βουρκωμένος σαν τα κλέφτικα τα βουνά, χωρίς τον κλέφτικο τον ηρωισμό. Με ξέρετε και ξέρετε πως το λέω με τον πόνο της καρδιάς μου. Μα μήπως δεν πρέπει να το λήψε; Είμαστε απολίτιστο, μικρό, συγχά μάλιστα και βάβαρο έθνος – όπως είναι τόσες φορές [end of page κγ] βάβαρο και το παιδί, μάλιστα σα γεννήθηκε σκάβο.

“Ας πούμε λοιπόν πως δεν αξίζουνε τίποτις και σώνει!”

Τέτοια ή παρόμοια λόγια θυμόμια να μου είπατε μια μέρα στην εξοχή, που μιλούσαμε για την Ελλάδα και που με τη συνθησιμένη μου την ειλικρίνεια, ένα ένα, σας αρδαιάζα τα τρομαχτικά μας τα ελαττώματα. Και να σας το μολογήσω τώρα που τα ξαναλέμε, απόρησα με το λόγο σας. Τι έφοκα που αποθαπνύεται ο Ρωμύος! Τι

έφοκα που του φέβγει το κορμάκι! Ένα στίβλωσε, αμέσως όλα για πέταμα. Όχι πρώτος όρος να μην το κρύβουμε, γιατί άλλα δεν έχουμε να γιαιψήσουμε. Βάση της γιαιψικής η διαγνώστική. Μα η αρρώστια η δική μας είναι αρρώστια το κάτου κάτου που γιαιπό δε θέλει. Ο γιαιπό της τουλάχιστο δεν είναι στο χέρι μας ο γιαιπός της είναι ο καιρός. Ξήμερα βρισκόμαστε σε μια εποχή της ζωής μας, εννοώ της εθνικής μας της ζωής, που μπορεί να την πούμε [end of page κδ] που φαίνεται πρόσκαιρη και μεταβατική. Από το ένα σημείο πηγαίνουμε στο άλλο, από τον έναν όχο στο τον αντικρύνονε, από τον έναν κόσμο, σε κόσμο καινούριο. Ίσως μάλιστα περνάμε, κυριολεκτικά και δίχως τόσες μεταφορές, από τον έναν τόπο στον άλλο δηλαδή από την Πόλη στην Αθήνα. Κι από θέλησα να δείξω στα Δνο Αδέσφια. Δεν το λέω για χωράτο, και την Πόλη δεν πρέπει να την καταφρονούμε, μήτε να καταφρονούμε τους Πολίτες. Πολίτες είναι οι πρώτοι Αθηναίοι, κ' η Αθήνα βήκε από την Πόλη. Το κέντρο το εαυαστατικό, η οδγήήτρα Ιδέα, στάθηκε η Πόλη μας η μεγάλη. Από τα σπάχνα της μας έβγαλε όλους. Ο εθνισμός κ' η θρησκεία βαστούνε από κει. Εκεί κρείμαστικε ο Πατριάρχης, σα νάέλαν οι Τούρκοι με τον Πατριάρχη να κρείμασσε στο Φανάρι, και τον εθνισμό μας τον ίδιο.

Το πιο περίεργο είναι που κι ο πρώτος μας ο πολιτισμός μας ήθε από την Πόλη, με τους πρώτους Αθηναίους που σας έλεγα, μ'ένα Μαβροκορόδατο, κατόν και με τόσους πλούσιους, αναθερμήτουνε στην Πόλη, γιατί αναθροφή τότες έπαυνε ο κόσμος στην Πόλη μονάχα. Οι Πολίτες είναι οι γραιμματισμένοι, ο καλζεργημένος ο Ρωμίδς είναι Πολίτης. Πολίτης κι ο πλούσιος ο Ρωμίδς [end of page κε]. Έδειξα στο βιβλίο μου ένα δυο. Μερικόν μάλιστα τους γνώρα, όταν ελιούνα παίδι, στο πατρικό μας το σπίτι, γιαιτ' εγώ που σας τα λέω είμαι Πολίτης από τα χρόνια τα παλιά. Τους πλούσιους, θα το θυμάστε από κάμποσες κουβέντες μας στο Ροσμαπατόνι, δεν τους αγάω με το παρπαάνω. Θα τους αγάπησω, σαν αρχίσουνε να δουλέβουνε για την Ιδέα, δηλαδή σαν την καταλάβουνε. Ώς τότες, ως βαφτίζονε οι Αθηναίοι με τόνομα τους τα δημόσια τα χτήρια, τα σκολεια, τις Ακαδημίες, ως τους στήλουνε αγάματα κι αναριάντες, τόνομα κ' η τιμήλη του πλουσιότερο θα λογαριάζη στο μάλο πούλο πίο λίγο από τόνομα του πιο παρκαταίου πούλη, που έγραψε ως είναι κ' ένα στίχο εθνικό.

Μα δε μου αρέσει κι ο πολιτισμός όπως τον έζει ο πλούσιος. Μας ετοιμάσε άλλη σκαβιά με τον παρά του. Ο νους πρέπει στην Ελλάδα να βασιάβη, αφού είναι τόπος που τον έλνρησε ο νους, που ο νους τον έφύλαξε τόσους αιώνες. Αφτό, η παυειμένη μου η πατρίδα η Πόλη δεν το κατάλαβε ακόμη. Δεν καταλαβαίνεται και σήμερις στην Πόλη. Πρέπει να καταλαβήη στην Αθήνα. Εκεί πάμε, σε τέτοιο σημείο θα φτάσουμε. Και δεν τονερίβουμε διόλου. Είναι πράμα. Δεν το βρίσκετε τότες σημερινό [end of page κς], άμα έγινε μια Ελλάδα, να φανούνε αμέσως τόσοι ποιητές, αμέσως να γράφεται η γλώσσα η εθνική; Ποιήσι και γλώσσα, θα πη νους. Χωρίς αυτά έθνος δεν υπάρχει και λγότερο από κάθε άλλο θα υπάρξη το έθνος το ελληνικό. Ώα να τοννοσσε ως και το χώμα, το αθάνατο, που με τη λεφτεριά, τι λέω; με τον πόθο μονάχο της λεφτεριάς, αντιλάησε χαρουνίενο από άκρη σε άκρη, όταν άκουσε τραγούδι στο βουνό.

Δε θα το δούμε τάχα στην Ελλάδα το βασίλειο του νου; Θα το δούμε; μπορεί μάλιστα η θυμαρνα σας να το δι καλήτεπα από μας – σα γράσσι. Ο δασκαλισμός μας ήθε από την Πόλη που και σήμερις ακόμη η καθαρεύουσα την έχει κάστρο. Είναι η καθαρεύουσα, θάρω, από τις δεισιδαιμονίες εκείνες που λέγαμε και που κολλάκεβεται, το φιλότιμο με δάφτες. Ο δυστυχιένος, ο παρπατηένος απ' όλους, ο σκάβος ο Ρωμίδς νοιώθει μεσα του την ανάγκη να πείσι τον κόσμο πως βαστάει

από προγόνους ξακουστούς, από γένος θεϊκό. Νομίζει πως με την καθαρέβουσα ταποδείχνει, αφού την πιστέβει πως είναι σαν άλλη αττική, τουλάχιστο σαν άλλη αρχαία, γιατί ακόμα δεν ξέρει, δεν έμαθε ακόμα, και δε βλέπει πως η δημοτική μόνη θα τον τιμήση, σα μοναχοκόρη της αρχαίας που είναι. Μα ένα κάποιο φιλότιμο, μια κάποια έλλειψη επιστήμης [end of page κζ'], τι άλλο σημαίνουνε παρά πως το έθνος μας δεν πρόφτασε ακόμη να προκόψη, όπως θα προκόψη κατόπι, και η καθαρέβουσα που ας φαίνεται το άκρον άωτο του πολιτισμού, μοιάζει πολύ περισσότερο σαν απομεινάρι της καταραμένης της σκλαβιάς, ίσως το φοβερότερο απ' όλα, γιατί δεν αφήνει το έθνος ναρθή στην αληθινή του τη συνείδηση. Δεν το αφήνει (sic) να γνωρίση τον εαυτό (sic) του, αφού δεν του αφήνει να γνωρίση τη γλώσσα του, δηλαδή την ψυχή του, δηλαδή την αλήθεια.

Την κληρονομήσαμε κι αυτή από την Πόλη. Ο πολιτισμός μας είναι πολιτικός πολιτισμός. Ο Κοραΐς κι ο Δούκας είχανε πολιτική αναθροφή, όπως όλοι στα χρόνια εκείνα. Ο Αστέρης μου, το ένα από τα δυο τΑδέρφια, όσο Πολίτης κι αν είναι, όσο κι αν καταγίνεται στα γράμματα, θα θυμάστε πως δεν είναι δάσκαλος, επειδή κ' είναι ποιητής. Δουλέβει τη Μούσα ενώ δουλέβει ο αδερφός του τον Έρωτα. Ο ένας την Αθηνά, ο άλλος την Αφροδίτη. Ποιος ξέρει; Μια φορά θάτανε η ποίηση χωριστή από την αγάπη. Δε βλέπουμε στον Όμηρο, δε βλέπουμε στους αρχαίους μας τους ποιητάδες, όξω από δυο τρείς, να τραγουδούνε, [να γράφουνε:] αθάνατα έργα για το χατίρι μιας γυναίκας. Ώθηση καμιά γυναίκα δεν τους δίνει· καμιά γυναίκα δεν τους οδηγάει, δεν τους παρασταίνει την Ιδέα. Κι αφτό μας τόμαθε ο Ντάντες. Κι από τον [end of page κη'] Ντάντε, όσο κι από τον Όμηρο, μπορεί μάλιστα περισσότερο, βαστάει κάθε σημερινή φιλολογία. Τόσο είναι αληθινό πως άλλη πηγή από την ποίηση δεν έχει ο ανθρώπινος ο νους! Καταλάβαμε κιόλας πως ποίηση δεν πρέπει να λέμε μόνο τους στίχους. Ποίηση θα πούμε και το ρομάντζο. Είναι ποίηση κ' ιστορία συνάμα. Το ρομάντζο κατάντησε καθρέφτης που καλότερος από ζουγραφιά, δίχως να μας κολακέψη, μας δείχνει, δείχνει στο έθνος, το πρόσωπό μας, όπως είναι. Το ρομάντζο έγινε και καθρέφτης συμβολικός, αφού στο ένα πρόσωπο μας φανερώνει άλλα πολλά. Δεν πρέπει να καταφρονούμε το ρομάντζο. Μερικοί το παίρνουνε για λαφριά φιλολογία, για διασκέδαση μιας ώρας. Σ' ένα μόνο συμφωνώ μαζί τους, που το ρομάντζο δεν πρέπει νάναι βαρετό, αν και στην Εβρώπη σπουδαίοι μυθιστοριογράφοι μας είπανε πως κι αφτό δεν πειράζει. Σκοπός του μυθιστοριογράφου είναι να σου παρουσιάση την αλήθεια, κ' έτσι να σε κάμη να συλλογιστής. Αμα βαριέσαι τέτοιο ρομάντζο, θα βαρεθής κάθε αλήθεια και κάθε συλλογή.

Εμείς οι καημένοι κοπιάζουμε για να σας γλεντίσουμε όλες κι όλους ως και με την αλήθεια. Πόσες και πόσες αλήθειες δεν έχουμε ακόμη να σας ξετυλίξουμε στα βιβλία μας! Πως δεν κοιτάζουμε τη σημερινή μας την κοινωνία; Πως δεν κοιτάζουμε το Ρωμιό; Κάθε [end of page κθ'] Ρωμιός που θα τον ψυχολογήσουμε, θα μας πλουτίση και μ' ένα καινούριο πρωτότυπο ρομάντζο. Από κει θα μας βγούνε Τολστόηδες, Μπαλζάκηδες και Φλωμπέρηδες, που καλό θάτανε να τους ξεχνούσαμε κάπου κάπου, για να προσέξουμε στους δικούς μας, τους τιποτένιους. Είναι το ρομάντζο έργο εθνικό, εθνικό και το διάβασμά του. Να σας ανοίξω την καρδιά μου; Γιατί όχι; Το ξέρω πως τα βιβλία μου μεγάλα πράγματα δεν είναι· ωστόσο είναι ρωμαίικα και Ρωμιούς ψυχολογούνε. Τόχω κρυφό παράπονο που ο Γιαννίρης ταγαπημένο μου το παιδί, πέρασε απάνου κάτου σαν απαρατήρητος και για ποιο λόγο; Για την ανεμελιά μας. Δε μας μέλει ούτε για τη γλώσσα μας, ούτε λοιπόν και για την ψυχή μας τη ρωμαίικη. Αχ η Ρωμαίικη ψυχή! Πρέπει και στα ρομάντζα και στη ζωή να την αγαπούμε. Πρέπει να την αγαπάτε και σεις οι γυναίκες. Είστε ρωμιές. Απο σας και τη ρωμιοσύνη, έχετε, όσες έχετε, και την ποίησή σας. Εμείς σας



χρωστούμε τα πιο μεγάλα μας ιδανικά. Δουλέβουμε για την Ελλάδα, και [αφτή;] θα το καταλάβη. Εσείς το ξέρετε κι από τώρα. Για τούτο και θέλησα να σας αφιερώσω ένα βιβλίο που κι αφτό, σαν όλα τάλλα, γράφτηκε μόνο και μόνο για την Ιδέα.

Ο φίλος σας  
Ψυχάρης

Τετάρτη, 21 τ'Αη Δημήτρη, 1903

[end of page λ']

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